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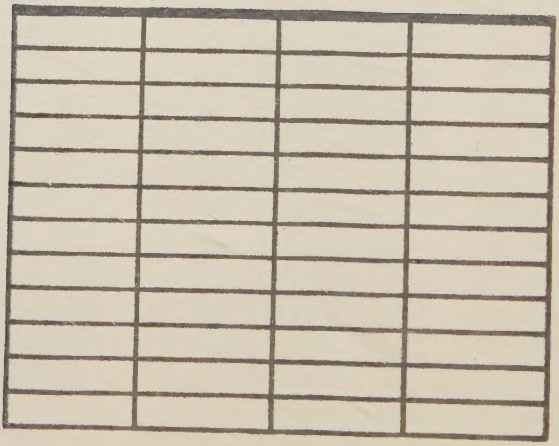

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THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES

BY

R. E. NEIGHBOUR, D.D.

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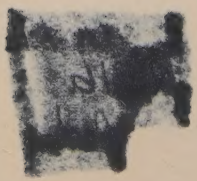

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CHAPTER I.

IS JAMES' EPISTLE, A CHURCH EPISTLE?

IS JAMES' EPISTLE, A CHURCH EPISTLE?

WE begin, at this hour, a series of messages on one of the great outstanding Epistles of the New Testament. We fear that the Epistle of James has not been read as it should be read, nor obeyed as it should be obeyed.

The only reason we know for the side-stepping of God's message through James, is that he addressed his Epistle thus:—

TO THE TWELVE TRIBES SCATTERED ABROAD GREETING:

There are some potent considerations just here. Shall the Church side-track every Book in the Bible, and every word which is, in any way, Jewish?

I. JERUSALEM IS NOT THE CHURCH.

We have hearty accord with Dr. Scofield's "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth". We heartily agree with those who say that dispensational words addressed to Israel should not be stolen from her. Jerusalem means Jerusalem, and not the Church. Zion is in Jerusalem, and not in Illinois.

There are some, indeed, who follow a care-free method of interpretation. They run through the Prophets of the Old Testament and take away from Israel all of her particularized promises of blessing and transfer them to the Church; then, with unhesitant freedom, they read every contingent "curse", upon Israel, and leave it undisturbed, in the possession of the Chosen Race. This is "sooth-

ing" and "convenient" to the Gentile believer, to say the least, but unkind to Israel.

In order to rightly grasp God's message it is always necessary to ponder three things: 1. Who is speaking? 2. To whom is He speaking? 3. What is He speaking? All of this we grant, yea, we teach.

But we must not do violence to this Scripture:

> "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
> "That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" *(II Tim. 3:16,17)*.

The man of God cannot be throughly furnished, if he eliminates from his life any part of the "all Scripture". Scripture is profitable for doctrine; and, Scripture in doctrine, must be rightly divided. Scripture is, however, written for more than doctrine; it is profitable for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. In this final threefold sense all Scripture is profitable to all people, of all ages.

Each statement of the Word of God has one great **doctrinal** interpretation; however, it has varied vital applications.

We must remember that everything that happened to Israel along the way, was written for types, examples, ensamples unto us upon whom the end of the ages is come. Israelitish history carries many sign-posts of warning to Gentile saints.

We have no sympathy with taking Psalms with a distinctive Jewish message and writing over them such a heading as this: "David professeth his joy in the Church." David never knew that there would be a Church. However, God knew it,

and He dictated through David Psalm after Psalm that carries a gracious message to the Church.

This is true because an unchanging God dealt much the same with Israel of old, as He deals with the Church now. And, besides, the great central thought of the Psalms and of the Prophets is Christ, who is also the "all in all" to the Church.

II. JAMES ADDRESSES CHRISTIAN JEWS.

The Epistle of James holds a significant place in its message to the Church, just as does also the Epistle to the Hebrews. Both Epistles have a strong Jewish tinge, but the "tinge" is neither dispensational, nor national. While James addresses the twelve tribes, he certainly is not telling them anything peculiarly and nationally Israelitish; on the other hand he speaks of those he addresses as "my brethren". Paul spoke of **unbelieving** Jews as "brethren", but he explained his term. He said, "My brethren", **my KINSMEN,** according to the flesh". He did not call them "brethren" in Christ, for he was longing for their **salvation.** We believe that James is addressing the **saints in the twelve tribes scattered abroad,** because, having given his salutation, he immediately says, "**Brethren,** count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations"—the "brethren" in Christ, not in the flesh.

That is made plain from chapter 2:1, where we read a warning to **brethren** who have the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect to persons. Several times more in the short Epistle the Holy Spirit leads James to speak in no uncertain terms about the "brethren".

Some one may say, why all of this discussion?

This is the why. There are some very potent things that lie ahead of us in the Book of James, which some people want to side-track. We want to assure them that God is speaking to Christians and not to national and unbelieving Israel.

III. IN THE CHURCH, NEITHER JEW NOR GENTILE.

If you argue that the Christians of James are the twelve tribes scattered abroad and not Gentile Christians, we are quick to respond that in the Word of God, the Spirit does not differentiate in doctrine between Jewish saints and Gentile saints. What is said to the one, is said to the other.

Peter, at the first, wanted to make a difference between the Jewish believer and the Gentile, but God would not have it so. God let down a net filled with unclean things to teach Peter this most important lesson.

Paul also withstood Peter to the face, on this very thing. The whole Book of Galatians has a long and loud call to saints not to become entangled again with a Jewish yoke. In the Church, in Christ Jesus, in the new man, throughout this whole dispensation, there is neither Jew nor Greek. The message to the one is the message to the other.

The Book of James is relegated by some outstanding Bible teachers because it was addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. I am willing to grant that God had some very special things to say to the believing Jews who were scattered abroad, but I cannot grant that what God says to them, is not for Gentile saints.

At Pentecost, there were Jews and proselytes

from many a nook and corner of Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Asia, Egypt, Italy, Crete and other regions. These later returned to their homes and gave testimony concerning Christ to multitudes of people. In addition, there was a scattering abroad as a result of persecution in Jerusalem.

However, brethren, what God said to the saints in Israel carries no doctrine that is not applicable to all saints. When Christ died, and not when Paul turned to the Gentiles in Acts 28, the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was broken down. From that moment Jew and Gentile were not only members of the same household, and partakers of the same promises, but they were under the same jurisdiction. There are not two bodies of Christ, a Jewish Body and a Gentile Body. There are not two Churches, a Jewish Church and a Gentile Church. The Church is one. The Body is one. The message to the Jew is therefore the message to the Gentile.

In pleading for the universality of the Spirit's message to the whole Church in the Epistle of James, I am, at the same time, pleading for a like universality for Hebrews. There is now, and there has always been but One Church, one Head of that Church, and one message to that Church. Christian Jews once predominated in the Church, and naturally they were addressed in particular. Christian Gentiles predominate now. At this moment we are speaking particularly to them. Even God might do so, if He so desired. No one has dared to say that every word in Paul's "prison" Epistles is not applicable to-day to every Christian Jew, in the full force of their meaning. Very well, let no one, then, rise

up and say that every word in James or Hebrews is not in full force to Christian Gentiles. Where are we, anyway? Why do some Bible teachers endeavor forcibly to put asunder what God hath joined together? Shall Bible teachers seek to erect a wall of partition on the very spot where God has broken it down?

IV. THE ORDINANCES IN THE CHURCH ARE STILL IN FORCE.

Some have gone so far as to insist that the ordinances of baptism and of the Lord's Supper do not belong to the Church. They speak of a transitional period in which God had a "Jewish" Church. This gradually changed, they assert. As the visca in an egg changes daily, and there is by stated assents, less visca and more chick, so the message to the Jewish Church changed, and there was a growing rejection of the Jewish Church, until at last when Paul said, "Be it known therefore that the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, that then there was no more a distinctive message to the Jewish Church, but to the Gentile Church.

We deny this contention in toto. Let it be understood that we believe that during the early days of the Church, there was a distinctive effort made by the Spirit to reach national Israel. "To the Jew first" was fully enforced. But "also to the Greek" was likewise enforced.

Here is the crux of the whole thing. Some Bible teachers and many Bible lovers have failed to mark the distinction between God's national dealings, and His Church dealings.

We must remember that from the beginning,

that is from Pentecost, the command of God was a world-wide command. Peter had no Divine warrant to isolate his love and affections, and his testimony to Jerusalem and the Jews. Christ Jesus had definitely given orders that they were to "tarry in Jerusalem only until they were endued with power from on high. The spirit of this command is seen in the fact that at Pentecost the Spirit came when Jews and proselytes were there from every section of the Gentile world, and these hastened home with messages of God's saving grace, fulfilling God's purpose to send His Gospel to all people.

Soon after Pentecost the Lord pressed Philip on to give the Gospel to a Gentile, a eunuch of Ethiopia, who was of great authority under Candace, the queen of the Ethiopeans. There was no transitory Jewish Church in this. Soon after, God saved Paul on the Damascus road, and immediately gave Ananias to understand that Paul was a chosen vessel to go before the Gentiles and kings, as well as to the Children of Israel. There was no isolated Jewish Church in this.

We know there were, in those days, Churches in Judea; but Churches were also springing up in many distant parts.

Peter, who at first was biased with a Jewish prejudice, finally addressed His Epistle to "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia". These "strangers" were doubtless saved as a result of the return of baptized Jews from Jerusalem, after Pentecost.

What does this all mean? Simply this. From the very beginning, from the moment that the

Church was born, God's testimony was to a whole world, and included both Jew and Gentile.

V. THE PAULINE EPISTLES WERE AN ADDED LIGHT.

We are ready to grant that Paul was commissioned to fill up the Word of God. That to him, God gave the peculiar and particular doctrines that were to be the basis for Church polity and practice. However, we emphatically **deny** that the **added** doctrines in any way affected or changed the great underlying statement of Jesus Christ Himself, which He gave on the Mount of Olives, saying,

> "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
> "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
> "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen" *(Matt. 28:18-20).*

There is not one word in any of Paul's Epistles that in the least voids this command. The truth is that this command of Christ is continually reinforced in the Epistles.

There is another thing that we emphatically deny. It is this

We deny that the **Pauline Prison Epistles,** changed, or eliminated any word or doctrine, that Paul's other Epistles had given.

We heard a Bishop of a post-millennium people say once that Paul had pressed the Second and immanent Coming of Christ in his First Letter to the Thessalonians, but that he had learned better, and had completely changed his testimony, when he wrote his Second Epistle. We deny the Bishop's

plea. Had the Bishop been an angel from Heaven, we would stamp his words as false.

Remember this: **ADDITIONAL LIGHT DOES NOT ALTER LIGHT ALREADY GIVEN.**

We are just as insistent that the Epistles other than Paul's are definite and directly Church Epistles.

Shall we relegate those matchless Epistles of John and Peter and of Jude and James, as having no direct doctrinal bearing on the Church. Never. The Church needs to ponder every word of these Epistles and of Hebrews as well, that she may do according to **all** that is written therein.

VI. THE EARLY CHURCH MIRACLES.

Some teach that the miracles and the deeds of the early Apostles prove conclusively that there was a "transitional church period". Christ had given certain signs that should follow believers. Hear His words:

> "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
>
> "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.
>
> "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" *(Mark 16:17-19).*

Here is the argument. If such signs were for the days of the Church's beginning alone; and the Pauline prison Epistles do not reiterate the continued promise of such signs, then the prison Epistles are alone left to the Church of our day.

With seeming good logic these teachers claim

that if Mark 16:17-19 is revoked, Matthew 28:18-20 is likewise revoked, and the whole doctrinal basis of the Acts of the Apostles, so far as the Church of to-day is concerned, is revoked.

According to them when James, the writer of the Epistle we are now beginning to study, spoke at the "council" in Jerusalem, his words did not give what we have always thought they gave—God's purpose for the Church in this age. Here are James' words:

> "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me:
> "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.
> "And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,
> "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:
> "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.
> "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" *(Acts 15:13-18)*.

For our part we believe all of these Scriptures have a definite and authoritative Church message.

Mark 16:17-19 is distinct from Matthew 28:18-20: in one thing at least—Matthew 28 says, **"Unto the end of the age".**

Mark 16:17-19 had a distinctive Church message and it was literally fulfilled, during the early days of the Church; * *.

We recently saw in a church, these words inscribed over the platform—"Jesus the same, yesterday, to-day and for ever". The words are true, yet Jesus Christ who is always the same may not always **operate** the same. The words, "All things are possible to him that believeth", still stand. Je-

sus' power is still limited according to man's faith. See Mark 6:5. Truly Jesus is the same.

We are often asked if Pentecost can be repeated. If the question means, Can the Spirit descend every time we ask God to send Him, we answer, positively, **No.** The Spirit is now here. However, the Holy Spirit has not lost any of His power, which He manifested in the early Church. He can still do anything **that** He wants to do, and **when** He wants to do it. That He did this or that in the First Century does not mean that He must do it **now.** The Holy Spirit is Sovereign and works where and how He wills to work. There are differences in operations.

We would like to remind our brethren that the Lord Jesus did not wait until the added light of the Pauline and other Epistles was given to state the particular blessing that Pentecost should vouchsafe to the Church during its long years of testimony. He Himself summed up the Church's part in Pentecost in these words:

> "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" *(Acts 1:8).*

Personally, we concede that the special manifestations of the Spirit's working as given by Christ in Mark 16, may have had a completed fulfilment in the Church's earliest functionings. However we are unwilling, because of this seeming lack of continued universal fulfilment, to side-track from a vital Church relationship all but Paul's Prison Epistles. The Spirit **may WORK** differently, but He is working differently in the same and only Church, the Body of Christ.

The Book of Acts relates varied experiences of the early Church. We may not take everything the Church then did as binding on us to-day, any more than Israel of old should have taken the acts of their first King Saul as binding on subsequent kings.

What saints **did** may afford us splendid examples and great inspiration, but what God **said** must be obeyed. If Christ said, to Go—Disciple—Baptize—Teach—and "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age"—this is to be obeyed.

If Christ said, "Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" —this is to be obeyed, and obeyed in preference to a supposed "action" of those who may have baptized "only" in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Let us not remove from the authoritative Church calendar, the Book of James, nor any other of the Epistles. Their messages are too vital to be set aside.

VII. LAW AND GRACE IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

Some teach that the so-called "transition period" of the Church was a mixture of Law and of Grace. That it was not until Paul gave his clear messages on Grace that the Church was removed from the legalities of Judaistic rites and ceremonies.

Had Luther lived in the early part of the first century, he could not rightly have stood for salvation by grace alone, and apart from works, at least, so far as freedom from Judaistic ceremonies were concerned—this is their contention.

Once more we are ready to grant, yea, to insist

that there were in the Jewish contingency of the early Church, certain disciples and leading lights (Paul called them **pillars**) who sought to Judaize the Church. Some went so far as to say, "Except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved".

Indeed there is unto this day a most strenuous effort on the part of some to place the Church under certain Judaizing influences.

Let us remember, however, that neither the efforts of first century Judaizers, nor of the twentieth century Judaizers, is of God. The Spirit's message from the beginning of the Church age has been freedom from all of the legalities of Jewish rites. It may have taken a long time for men, filled with religious prejudices, to adjust themselves to God's new message, but His message was never altered, never changed from the moment that the Church was born, unto this good hour. God never at any time sanctioned or commanded circumcision nor any other Jewish "yoke of bondage" on the Church.

CONCLUDING WORDS

We have given a whole sermon to this theme because we believe it is greatly needed. Let us now sum up our contentions:

1. The whole Bible is for the whole Church, so far as its great underlying message is concerned. However, the Word of God must be rightly divided, and promises or curses, ceremonies or services, distinctively given to Israel or to any one else, must not be placed upon the Church.

2. James addresses Christian Jews.

3. In the Church there is neither Jew nor Gentile, the middle wall of partition is broken down. In this age both are one. Into the one body, we are all baptized into one Spirit, and are made to drink of the same Spirit.

The message ascribed in the Book of James to the twelve tribes scattered abroad is, primarily, a message to Jewish believers, who were the early nucleus of the Church, but is to-day just as vital to Gentile Christians, as to Jewish Christians. Its message should not be relegated as applicable only to first century Jewish saints.

4. Baptism and the Lord's Supper should not be isolated to a so-called transition period of the Church's history. They are ordinances **until He come.**

5. The added light of the Pauline Epistles in no way discounts nor does it do away with the Church testimony already given. Additional light does not alter past light.

6. The great outstanding miracles may not now prevail, however the Spirit, is sovereign, and works only as He wills. Should He want again to startle the world with the miraculous, He may do so in His own time and way. However we should beware of counterfeits along this line.

7. There was no "transition period", when the **Lord placed the Church** partly under Judaistic rites, and partly under grace. The Church has always been and will always be under grace and free from all Jewish ceremonial laws until Christ shall come to receive it to Himself. There was a transitional period with the Church, as it adjusted itself

to God's new way; but there was no such a period with God. God revealed His plan as fast as the Church could take it in, but there were no doctrinal changes.

Our next message will enter into the Book of James itself. We will read it and study it with an ear open to its teaching, believing that in it God has something definitely for us.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRIUMPHS OF TRIALS

THE TRIUMPHS OF TRIALS

THE twelve tribes were evidently all represented among the visiting Hebrews who gathered together in Jerusalem, at the time of the Feast of Pentecost, when, according to the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit descended from on high.

More than that. Among those saved during those memorable days, following Pentecost, were, doubtless, many representatives of the twelve tribes. All of these returned to the countries from whence they had come. If some tarried in Jerusalem, rejoicing in their new-found faith, they too, must have turned their faces homeward when the persecution against the Church in Jerusalem came.

This wonderful salvation that reached even unto the twelve tribes at Pentecost appears prophetic of that great day of the Lord's Second Coming when a Nation will be born in a day. The twelve tribes will be gathered together, out of all nations and they will become **one nation in the land and the Lord Jesus will be King over them all.**

It seems not only the natural thing, but the needed thing for God through James to address a Letter to the saints among the varied tribes, who were scattered abroad. They needed encouragement and instruction.

The Holy Spirit at once begins to speak to them concerning the fiery trials that had come upon them. He said:

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

"Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" *(James 1:2, 3).*

I. LET US FIRST NOTE THE SALUTATION: "MY BRETHREN".

The scattered Israelites were the brethren of James according to the flesh, but they were also his brethren in Christ. In the words before us, the thought uppermost was the latter kinship.

No matter how endearing the ties of flesh and blood may be, they do not compare with the ties of spiritual birth.

The world is always doting about "The Brotherhood of Man". We grant that there is a human brotherhood, based on a human fatherhood. That is, all men are of the same flesh which dwell upon the earth. Nothing has ever happened to contaminate the race from its direct lineage back to Adam, the race's head. As fellow-men, or fellow-brothers in the flesh, there are ties that bind us.

Yet, there is a tie closer, than the ties which link us back to Adam. There are the ties of separate family life. Members of one family, bearing one family name, with a direct and intimate connection to one earthly parenthood, form a brotherhood most endearing. Families have always been, and should always remain a nucleus of true affection, among the peoples of this earth.

Granting all that has been said of these two brotherhoods, we desire to discuss, for a moment, the closer and more abiding ties of The Brotherhood of Saints. Only those who have been born again, and have God as their Father, can claim a part in these ties. There is no such thing as a Universal Brotherhood among men, based on God as a Universal Father, for the simple fact that God is "Father" only of those who believe.

The word "brethren" is not a mere formality, it is an actuality. Saints are truly "brethren", begotten of one Father, and members of one family.

The Word of God lays great stress upon this fact. John is led particularly to press it. Observe some of his uses of the word.

First, we have that great underlying statement: "Behold, what manner of love the **Father** hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the **sons of God**". Here then, we have a common **Father,** and the subsequent sequence, common **sons of God.**

Secondly, we have a differentiation between God's sons and Satan's sons. "In this the **children of God** are manifest, and the **children of the devil**".

Thirdly, we have the statement, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the **brethren**".

Fourthly, we have the wonderful word, "We ought to lay down our lives for the **brethren**".

Fifthly, we have a solemn but resultant warning,—"Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him"? These statements are culled from among others, but all from I John 3.

Thus James uses a most significant term, when in his salutation He says, **"Brethren"**. How tender, how suggestive was the word of Paul to Philemon, "The bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, **brother**". Philemon deserved the name "brother", because he refreshed his "brethren".

We may not all like to "brother" and "sister" saints, yet we must remember that all who can

call God Father in sincerity and in truth, are in a most real, and blessed way, brothers and sisters.

The second birth brings us into a blessed relationship with all saints.

"Blest be the tie that binds,
Our hearts in Christian love,
The fellowship of kindred minds,
Is like to that above.

"We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows,
The sympathizing tear."

II. LET US NOW NOTE THE ADMONITION, "COUNT IT ALL JOY".

Let us hesitate a moment to reflect. Anything that is "all joy" has nothing in it of regret, no room for sorrow, no place for complainings. Anything that is "all joy", is certainly something to be coveted and not shunned; sought, and not cast away.

However remember that this "all joy" is to be a "reckoning", a "counting". The suggestion is that the joy which we are about to discuss is not usually conceded a joy. Indeed it may be thought quite the opposite. Therefore the Apostle is urging a **new view-point.** He wants us to look a bit more deeply into the things which we naturally count, "dark"; that we may find them light. Where we thought there was sorrow, he wants us to find song. He is going to dissect some of those things which trouble us, that we may learn to **count** them not only **joy,** but **all joy.**

We are coming to believe that to spiritual vision, testings present nothing but joy. Did not the

Spirit, through Paul, emphasize this in the Philippian Letter? The **joy** of this Book is prefaced by the word, "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel".

With this conceded, Paul soon declares, that, although he was persecuted, because of some who preached the Gospel in strife; yet, said he, "What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice".

Paul even went so far as to say, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all".

No wonder he adds, "Rejoice in the Lord **alway**, and again I say, Rejoice".

III. LET US NOW NOTE THE CONDITION FOR ALL JOY—"WHEN YE FALL INTO DIVERS TEMPTATIONS".

We begin to see why James wrote "**count it**" all joy. Divers testings, that is, trials of every kind are not usually considered as causes for **all joy**. Yet they are so reckoned in this Epistle. James is not alone in this conception.

Paul wrote, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory".

Peter wrote, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ".

Christ said, "Ye now therefore have sorrow; but

I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you".

Surely, here is good ground for counting our present testings "all joy".

James, however, is going to give us, not so much the far-flung blessings that accrue to us from our "temptations" or "testings", but he has a cause for "all joy" that lies near at hand. He seeks to show the present and immediate results of these things.

IV. LET US NOTE THE IMMEDIATE RESULTS OF DIVERS TEMPTATIONS.

Here is the message as James gives it:

> "Knowing *this,* that the trying of your faith worketh patience.
>
> "But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" *(James 1:3,4).*

What is the result of divers kinds of testings? They work patience. Patience is one of the fruits of the Spirit, but the Spirit matures it through the beneficent effects of divers testings.

We wish that we might obey the injunction of James and "let patience have her perfect work".

Let trials come, they only make us more like the Master. Let trials come, they only are the fire that burns out the dross.

Apart from the fiery trials that try us, we never would know the blessings of the Saviour's face.

Had it not been for the billows dashing hard against the ship, the Lord would not have found it necessary to come to the disciples, walking upon the sea.

Had Paul never known the fierceness of the Euroclydon that swept the Mediterranean, he had never known the glory of the angel's presence, as

he stood by him, when all hope that they should be saved had passed, and said, "Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar".

All of us are familiar with the story that is told about the polishing of diamonds. It must be held long against a wheel, and polished until it sparkles with glory. So do our testings polish us.

Let us not despair, then, as our trials press heavy against us. God has said it—"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it".

Charles H. Spurgeon says a wholesome word along this very line:

> "At the battle of Crescy, where Edward the Black Prince, then a youth of eighteen years of age, led the van, the king, his father, drew up a strong party on a rising ground, and there beheld the conflict in readiness to send relief where it should be wanted. The young prince being sharply charged, and in some danger, sent to his father for succour; and as the king delayed to send it, another messenger was sent to crave immediate assistance. To him the king replied, 'Go, tell my son that I am not so inexperienced a commander as not to know when succour is wanted, nor so careless a father as not to send it.' He intended the honour of the day should be his son's, and therefore let him with courage stand to it, assured that help should be had when it might conduce most to his renown. God draws forth His servants to fight in the spiritual warfare, where they are engaged, not only against the strongholds of carnal reason, and the exalted imaginations of their own hearts, but also in the pitched field against Satan and his wicked instruments. But they, poor hearts, when the charge is sharp, are ready to despond, and cry with Peter, 'Save, Lord, we perish'; but God is too watchful to overlook their exigencies, and too much a Father to neglect their succour. If help, however, be delayed, it is that the victory may be more glorious by the difficulty of overcoming."

What shall we do? "Let patience have her perfect work".

V. LET US FINALLY NOTE THE GLORIOUS CLIMAX OF DIVERS TESTINGS.

"That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" *(James 1:4, l.c.).*

What a glorious capstone is this! How high, how beautiful!

(a) **"Perfect"**—the word conveys the thought of fully grown. God is interested in the development of His children. The babe lying in his mother's arms is a child of possibilities. However, before he reaches full growth, before his muscles are developed, and his strength established, there is much of exercise, much of endurance needed.

The blacksmith secures his great muscles in his arm by the constant swing of his hammer. The great oak is made strong by the winds that seek its overflow. The fiercer the winds the more does the oak send down and out its great roots to lay hold upon the earth.

Thus trials and temptations all tend to make us perfect. Peter, in the Spirit put it this way:

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you" (I Peter 5:10).*

Wonderful, is it not? The very things we most dread, even "suffering a while", God will use to perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle us.

Then, if such gracious climaxes of Christian development come from "sufferings", let sufferings come to us, undreaded, as God may find it necessary to place them upon us.

If we know He stands guard over every trial, over every testing, we will not fear. God tested Israel forty years in the wilderness, to humble her, and caused her to hunger, that she might learn that He could feed her with the Bread from Heaven.

God's ideal for us is a "perfect man", developed unto "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ".

Alas, alas, too many believers are still babes in need of milk, whereas, they should long ago have grown unto full age, and have become teachers, enjoying the strong meat of the Word.

(b) **"Entire".** This word suggests "full-rounded", "completed". It carries the same thought as I Thessalonians 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly". The word "wholly" means "entirely", "completely". It is made to include body, soul and spirit; all "preserved blameless, unto the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ".

We grant that "entire" presents no small reach of spiritual attainment. But God does not plan small things for us. God does not want His representatives among men, to live in any low lands of grace. He wants to lift us up onto Heaven's table lands. He wants us to portray all the virtues of His own holiness.

The Children of Israel caused God's Name to be continually blasphemed by the excesses of evil that marked their lives and guided their tongues. Shall we follow in their footsteps?

"Entire"—the word amazes us. Can it be made real in all the depths of its significance in our lives? Yes, God can do it.

But, think of **how** He does it. He lets patience have her perfect work.

How many are the calls to patience! Even now the words of James in the fifth chapter of his Book rings in our ears, "Be **patient** therefore, brethren, unto the Coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long **patience** for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also **patient**".

Then, again, James is led to add, "Ye have heard of the **patience** of Job".

My beloved, let us all bend the neck and gladly bear the yoke of our afflictions, and sufferings in all patience; for they will make us **perfect**, and **entire.**

This is seen as an accomplished fact, in some of the ripened lives of the Old Testament Prophets. They grew into a fruitage of Divine graces that graciously adorned the Name of the God whom they served.

This is also seen in many a missionary, who, through many testings, has ripened in rich Divine character as he has ripened in old age.

This is seen in the story of martyrs and of saints who have passed through many a struggle of faith, but have patiently endured.

(c) **"Wanting Nothing".** This is James' final word as he passes from the direct discussion of the temptations which work patience.

He says that when patience has had her perfect work, and the believer has become perfect and entire, he will be wanting in nothing. We take it that he means that all of the other graces will

have also come in, when patience shall have completed her work.

The Laodiceans thought themselves rich, but were poor. How different was the lot of Smyrna. Unto her, Christ said, "I know thy works, * * that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". Laodicea was rich in this world's goods, but had need of many things. Smyrna was poor in this world's goods, but had need of nothing in spirituals—she was rich.

Whom the world reckons rich, God reckons poor. Those whom the world thinks have need of all things, in fact have need of nothing. God grant that we may be found among those who are enriched in the eyes of God.

CHAPTER III.

THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE

THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE

THE Epistle of James considers many vital themes. In this, our third study, we come, first of all, to some stirring words about wisdom.

I. THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

"For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord" *(James 1:5-7).*

"If any of you lack wisdom". Wisdom is more than the accumulation of knowledge. It is the right use of knowledge. It carries with it "discretion" in action. Doing the right thing at the right time, and in the right way. It includes the power of discernment in spiritual things, and understanding the Word of God.

Where is he who does not lack wisdom? There are some men who are willing to cut all connections with a Higher Power; and to walk alone, leaning upon their own wisdom. For our part we would not dare so to walk. At those very times, when we have felt a little of the "know it all" spirit, and when we have not stopped to look to God for light and guidance, we have come to sorrow.

Some lack wisdom, and they are willing to acknowledge the fact, but they look to the wisdom of men. Instead of going to God they go to the "leaders" in their line of work. They lean upon an arm of flesh. They trust themselves to princes. They even "go down to Egypt for help."

We do not mean that consulting with men of large affairs is wrong, along business lines—yet even in these things we must lay everything before the Lord.

God said, "O that Israel had hearkened unto Me, I would have fed her with the finest of the wheat".

Who is the source of all wisdom? Who knows the end of all things? Who knows exactly what lies ahead? God.

But, says some one, how are we to get Divine wisdom? How can we lay hold upon the storehouse of all wisdom and make it to meet our needs. James says, "Let him ask of God".

What made David wiser than all the ancients? It was because he lived in touch with the Lord and continued in His precepts. Why was it that Daniel outshone the Chaldeans in wisdom, until he was said to have the wisdom of an angel? It was because of his walking and talking with God. He lived in the very presence of the Lord. He turned his face toward Jerusalem, even though he was housed in Babylon, and prayed unto the God of Heaven.

Saints do not need to hurry along on a rugged and unknown pathway, holding their own hand on the wheel, and driving on their car, in maddened leaps. Standing by their side, is One who knows the way they take, and He is ready to take the wheel and direct their way.

The story is told of how Emperor William of Germany, in the old days, riding through uncertain waters, entered the pilot house, rang for full speed ahead and started to take the wheel. The pilot

quickly reversed the order to the half speed which he was already using, ordered the emperor to keep his hand off the wheel; then he piloted his master and emperor safely to his destination. The pilot thought he would be dismissed on reaching shore, but instead he was promoted. The emperor on "cooling down" knew that the man, at the risk of his all, had, in reality only sought to protect his master.

Let us keep our hands off the wheel. Let us ask the Master of winds and of tempests to guide us safely on, till day is done. He will bring us into the desired haven.

II. LET HIM ASK IN FAITH.

James has more to say further on, about the prayer of faith, in another sphere. Just now he is discussing "wisdom" and he says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God * * but **let him ask in faith,** nothing wavering".

Wherever there is an element of unbelief in our faith, our hand is kept at least a little bit, upon the wheel. We want God's aid, but we do not want to relinquish our own hold. We want God to tell us what we ought to do, but we want to weigh every word He gives with our own wisdom, a wisdom which we have already confessed we do not have.

"O consistency, thou art a jewel."

The warning has, however, a deeper meaning. "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering", suggests several things:

1. **It suggests** that we must not doubt that God possesses the wisdom we so much need. Let him ask not doubting that God is wise. We immediate-

ly imagine that everybody knows that God is all wise. Perhaps so, but we are not so sure. Some saints may have faith in God's wisdom, in general, but not in their own special cases. They think of God as weighed down with heavier matters than their petty affairs. He is great, indeed, too great to be bothered with their exigencies. They think He stands guard over worlds, and universes, but not over the needs of individual men.

Oh, yes, in a general way we believe that God is all wise, but we think Him unconcerned with us. We imagine He has saved us and then left us to paddle our own canoe, and to hoe our own row. We have been "branded" and turned loose, on His great prairie expanses, to graze for ourselves.

If this is our conception of God we need not expect to receive anything through the prayer of faith, because with us, the very first principle of real faith is lacking.

We must believe that God not only possesses all wisdom, but that He possesses it for us; that He is interested in our special needs; that He knoweth the way that we take; that He thinks upon us, insignificant as we are; that He holds us by the hand —knows us by our name, and goes in the way before us. We are His abiding concern.

2. **It suggests** that we must not doubt God in His ability to give us wisdom. God not only has a storehouse of wisdom, but He is able to turn it loose. His aqueducts are not clogged, His channels are not closed.

Immediately some of you want us to tell **how** God imparts His wisdom to us, and how we can tell when it has arrived. You are chary lest you

mistake His wisdom and guidance. You want to know it, when it comes.

We may not be able to satisfy you in our reply. However we will seek to do so. The entrance of the wisdom of God giveth light. The things that were shady take on a different hue. Things that were crooked become straight. Dark things, are made plain. Where we groped in night, we now can see.

Where we were hesitant as to our way, we become established. When God's wisdom comes, the sense of uncertainty passes from us. Wisdom does not say, "I am here", but yet we know it has come, for assurance has come to our minds, and rest to our souls. We are "at rest". Before we hoped we were right; now, we know it. Before we had a sense of fear, and a dread as to the outcome, now we have no fear, no dread.

Paul speaks of being "renewed in the spirit of your minds". As God's wisdom comes in, we find that it has taken hold of our own wisdom. It does not cast our own minds away, but it renews them. God takes His seat in the citadel of our minds, and yet we are not mere atomatons, emasculated nothings. We think, and we think clearly. We see, and see with our own intellects, but we look through cloudless skies. We choose our own changes, decide our own steps, and yet we know that our decisions are His: not forced upon us, but received with joy. Our will is to do His will.

We walk our own way, now, without fear, because we have a rest of spirit, and know that our way is His. We walk His way with joy, because we choose it of our own volition.

This is what we are trying to say: When God gives us wisdom, He does not give us an order from above that goes contra to every sense of our own judgment. He rather enlightens our mind. He gives it large vision and clear sight. We never feel enslaved and driven. We walk as men, but we walk with God.

His will is our will, His way our way. We asked His wisdom because we repudiated our own; and, when He gave it, we made it ours, not by force; but by choice. We still have our own mind, but a mind touched and illumined by God.

III. "LET HIM ASK NOTHING DOUBTING".

In discussing "wisdom" James gives us a most vital condition to any prayer of faith, no matter in what realm that faith is acting. This is seen in James' added word—"Let him ask in faith nothing wavering * * for let not that man think that he shall receive **any thing** of the Lord". That is, Let not that man think that he shall receive wisdom, or anything else.

The prayer of faith is not a prayer of "hope sos". It is not Jonah-like,—building a booth on some vantage ground and waiting to see what may happen. The prayer of faith is a prayer that believes it has received its petition. A prayer according to Mark that really counts the request accomplished. He put it this way, quoting the words of Christ, "When ye pray believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them". James put it in negative, "He that doubteth * * shall receive nothing of the Lord".

How vital, then, in every realm of Christian realization is the prayer of faith. Some there are who have cast prayer aside because they feel it an hindrance. They have never known any real touch of the infinite in their hours of prayers. Their prayers have been a matter of form, they are perfunctory, so they have no faith in them. Prayer means nothing to them because they believe it gets them nowhere. They do not believe in prayer, because they do not believe in God.

Suppose God granted the prayer of those who have no personal touch with Him, no abiding faith in His power and no willingness to live in the wisdom they seek, they could not use rightly or righteously what they received. Wisdom is given for action, and not for the laying by in store. We pray for wisdom not that we may possess it, but that it may possess us, and lead us into perfected service for God.

We must stand in the realm of faith to get from God, because it is only as we stand in the realm of faith, that we can be used of God.

If we ask anything that we may consume it on our own lusts, further our own plans, and satisfy our own desires, we shall receive nothing by way of answer from God.

Unbelief is black with God's frown. Unbelief says, "God cannot, or else He can, but does not care to work in behalf of His own." Unbelief sees the wind and waves boisterous, and begins to sink; faith, in spite of wind and waves keeps an eye of unbroken confidence on Christ and walks on the waters.

IV. "WHO GIVETH TO ALL MEN LIBERALLY".

There are some places where the prayer of faith has special assurance in laying hold upon God. When we have a positive expression in the unerring Word of God, as to the will of God, we need have no hesitancy.

James seems to be saying, "Why should saints have doubts when they ask God for wisdom, for God is willing to give to all men liberally and He upbraideth not". James is reminding us that God wants His children to be wise, and to move in all wisdom toward those who are without, as well as toward their own brethren. James is reminding us that God will not upbraid us, find fault with us, if we ask Him to give us wisdom.

Shall a child fear to ask its father for the very thing which the father longs his child to have?

Some one says, If God wants us to be wise, why does He not give us wisdom without the asking? Have you never read? "Yet for all of these things will I be inquired of, by thee, O House of Israel"? God wants us to come to Him. He wants to help us, but He wants us to **seek** and ask His help.

When the Lord walked with the two disciples going to Emmaus, He wanted to go with them to their abiding place. Yet, He made as though He would go farther. Why did He not say, "I would like to go with you to your home"? Nay, He wanted to be asked. No sooner had the two disciples constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent", than He went in to tarry with them.

Now beloved, God wants to give us wisdom, if

we want to ask it. We must ask in faith, because unbelief would show Him that we did not believe His promise, and were therefore, in no spiritual condition to receive His wisdom.

Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. The wisdom of God cannot walk with the wisdom of the world. The man who is carnal and unbelieving is not prepared to use the "wisdom of God" even if He had it.

V. "LET HIM ASK OF GOD".

We have given a hurried study to the message of James concerning wisdom. Now we wish to consider what is included in **wisdom.**

Our first word is this—

The wisdom which is under discussion is not a wisdom that the world gives. It is a wisdom that cometh from above. Why do we say so? Because James says, "Let him **ask of God".** If it was to be found at school, James would have said, "Let him go to school". If it was to be found in the marts of trade, James would have said, "Let him go to town." If it could be found among the scholarship and the writings of men, James would have said, "Let him get in touch with the wise men of this world."

What James does say, is, "Let him ask of God". Not, "Let him ask of God" as a short cut to what he could get apart from God, by hard work—not that. James means, "Let him ask of God", because there is no one else to ask.

The wisdom of which James speaks, descendeth down from above. It is a wisdom, not of this world.

The wisdom of this world knows not God—could we ask God for such a wisdom, and ask in faith, nothing doubting?

The wisdom of this world crucified the Lord of Glory—shall we ask God to give us that wisdom? Never.

The wisdom of this world, understandeth not the things of God; shall we seek it then from God that we may freely know the things that are given us of God? Impossible.

The men of this world who professed themselves to be wise, became fools; they went so far as to refuse, in their human wisdom, to retain God in their knowledge; they even stooped to change the "glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things". Shall we seek this wisdom from God?

Suppose we turn to the world to seek wisdom, what will we find—only that which is foolishness with God? A wisdom that denies the Cross as madness and folly. Do we want such wisdom?

Suppose we turn to the world for wisdom, what will we find? Only a wisdom that comes to naught, for God hath said, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent". What do we want of such a wisdom?

Suppose we turn to the world for wisdom, what shall we find? Only a wisdom that God has rejected, and a wisdom that has not known God. What would we do with it, if we had it?

James tells us to ask wisdom from God, because God alone is the source of wisdom. God's fool-

ishness is wiser than men, and His weaknesses stronger than men.

God does not choose many wise men after the flesh, because their wisdom will be a hindrance, and not a help. However God wishes to make His servants wise, and Christ is made unto them the **wisdom** of God.

Lying before the Christian is a world of wealth in the Word of God, which the wisdom of this world cannot grasp. This Word is written by the Spirit of God. Inclosed in its pages are marvels of revelation that are veiled to the natural mind. To grasp its message and know its truths one must have wisdom. This wisdom must be gotten from Heaven. Therefore, "If any man lack wisdom, **let him ask of God,** who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not".

Lying before the Christian are mazes of perplexities in daily walk and conduct. The Christian often feels the need of wisdom. Let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DOUBLE-MINDED MAN

THE DOUBLE-MINDED MAN

James 1:8-11

HOW suggestive are the words of the 8th verse of the first chapter of James:

I. "A DOUBLE MINDED MAN IS UNSTABLE IN ALL HIS WAYS".

This is the Apostles comment on the man who seeks wisdom apart from the prayer of faith. James seems to be dissecting the man's innermost being. He called him double-minded.

We wish to make several comments:

1. A Man Is Double-minded When He Is Seeking to Serve God and Mammon. Sunday he is pious, Monday he is impious. He carries a semblance of religion, but knows nothing of its real power. He thinks he loves the Lord but he has not forsaken the world. He is trying to serve God in Egypt. He believes in the Lord, but still clings to the praises of men. He asks for Heavenly wisdom and still walks in his own.

This double-minded man, goes to church on Sunday, but to the theater on Monday. He teaches a Sunday School Class on one day, and instructs candidates for some worldly order on another day.

The double-minded man is good when he is with the good, and bad when he is with the bad. He is "at home" with both the godly and the worldly. Sometimes he even graces the table in one moment with his prayers, and then the ball-room, the next moment with his plaudits.

The double-minded man runs with the hare and

chases with the hounds. He pays his dues to both the church organization and also conforms to worldly organizations; he bears the yoke of the Son of God, but licentiates with the sons of men. His presence graces the Men's Sunday School class, where he is enthusiastically greeted, and also the men's Social club, where he is a fellow well liked.

This man of double mind is like the men in the days of King Ahaz, who were brought from varied lands unto Samaria. "They feared the Lord, and served their own gods after the manner of the nations, whom they carried away from thence". They are like the chief rulers who believed on Christ, but because of the Pharisees they would not confess Him, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God".

Hear ye the Word of the Lord:

> "No man can serve two masters; for either he will love the one, and hate the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other".

2. A Man Who Is Double-minded Is Unstable in All His Ways. He cannot enjoy his Lord, because he seeks to enjoy the world; he cannot enjoy the world for he knows he is untrue to his God.

He is not cold, exactly, because he holds somewhat to God; he is not hot because he holds somewhat to the world. He is lukewarm—tepid.

He is like the man of Ecclesiastes who says, "There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness". With this philosophy of the Christian life in his mind, he continues with human wisdom to join in Solomon's con-

clusions: "Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise; why shouldest thou destroy thyself? Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish; why shouldest thou die before thy time".

This man of the double-mind, is unstable. Like water that runs this way and that accordingly as the basin is tipped, so he is here and he is there. He is an uncertain quantity. You can not place him. He is not one upon whom you can build. He is a foundation of sand.

This double-minded man is unstable in his thinking. He has no definite conception of truth. He is not sure of anything, He is neither fundamentalist, nor modernist; white nor black; right nor wrong. He is a "think so", a "maybe," a "perhaps it is, and, perhaps it isn't." He has no deep and abiding conceptions of Christ as Son of God, Virgin Born, God made flesh, risen and seated, and coming again. He professes to believe, but could not tell you what he believes. He says he is saved, but how or why he knows not.

He thinks he **is,** but fears he is **not.** To-day he is up, to-morrow he is down. He is happy when in "luck", and miserable when out of "luck."

He says "I go, sir, but he goes not." He promises anything, everything, and fulfils nothing that is not convenient. When you place your finger upon him, like the proverbial flea, he is not there.

During the revival he stirs around a bit, but the rest of the year he is far away. His religion is of the force-pump variety. It works under pressure and then comfortably subsides. He is one of those old timey pumps you had to prime with a venge-

ance, whose waters ran as long as the handle was vigorously manipulated, and then sank away to the depth of the well, waiting another "arousement". He is one of those child-time trains, which moved only when pulled by a string, and even then was in constant danger of toppling over. He knows nothing of the inner fire of the Spirit which energizes true saints.

The churches are filled with these very people—unstable as water. Pastors are to be pitied, and yet they are in part to blame. They preach, or their predecessors preached an emasculated gospel, and they have reaped an emasculated membership.

God has said that, "Unstable as water ye shall not succeed". Here then is the root reason for much of the failure of the church. Think of the alarming reports sent out by the statisticians. A 500,000 slump in membership, in the U. S. A. in 1927. What is the cause? Churches are filled with people who possess no vital faith, no positive convictions of truth. Denominations have either denied the need of a creed, an "I believe", or else they have soft-peddled their doctrine. We are taught that doctrine is not an issue. We must open heart and hand to the man who denies every vital of the faith, because he is a part of our church machinery, and we need his influential support.

Unstable! Unstable! Unstable! This is the voice of God through James.

We pass now to James' next words in verses 9-11.

"Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

"But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

"For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways" *(James 1:9-11)*.

II. "LET THE BROTHER OF LOW DEGREE REJOICE".

A striking paradox. The Bible is full of paradoxes. The way to be rich is to become poor; the way to be strong is to be weak; the way to get up, is by going down; the way to become wise, is to become a fool.

Here is something on the same line. The brother of low degree should rejoice in the fact that he is exalted, the rich man in the fact that he is made low. Let us examine this statement that is so strange at first glance and see if we sense the mind of the Spirit who wrote it.

1. The Brother of Low Degree Is to Rejoice in That He Is Exalted. How is the lowly exalted? Let us see if Ephesians, chapter 2, will give us some light—"But God * * hath quickened us together with Christ; * * and raised us up together, and made us sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus".

Herein may the brother of low degree rejoice. What need he care for the higher worldly attainments of some, he has been seated in the Heavenlies with Christ. His fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Christ Jesus.

Riches may give men a certain preference and power among men, but the poorest of the poor who have Christ are exalted transcendently above all of the wealth of this world. A Crœsus has nothing

on a poor saint who has, through grace, been enriched with all the resources of God.

> "A tent or a cottage, what do I care,
> They're building a palace for me, over there;
> Though exiled from men, yet still I may sing,
> All glory to God, I'm a child of the King."

2. The Rich Brother Is to Rejoice in That He Is Brought Low. And how is the rich brother brought low. He is brought low in that he must at last stoop down and bend the knee. His riches may have caused him to become proud and self-confident. He is accustomed to the plaudits of men. He is a great one, held in high esteem. Yet he must come to Christ as a sinner, confessing his need, forsaking his self-trust.

We all remember how the rich man whom Christ loved refused to leave all and follow Christ. As he went his way, Christ said, "How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven". Christ went on to speak of the camel and the needle's eye. We know how the camel must unload and get down on his knees to pass the Needle's Eye. So must the rich man unload: he must no longer place his confidence and trust in uncertain riches.

But why should the rich man rejoice in that he is made low? For this cause, that through confessing his need, and coming to the Saviour; through his taking upon himself the name of the despised and rejected Son of God He too shall be made rich.

Christ Himself was rich, and for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. That means this, I feel sure—we, as we enter into His poverty, and become poor for

Him shall, with Him, pass through His poverty and ours into His riches, which thus become our riches.

A rich man has every reason to rejoice when he sees that through making himself low with Christ, and giving up all claim to riches, he finds himself laying up unto himself friends who shall receive him into everlasting habitations.

Let the rich man pause and see his riches passing away; let him see himself robbed by death of all that he possesses; then he will rejoice in that he is made poor, because he by grace has been given riches that abide for evermore.

The Bible gives, in James, this same message. "But the rich in that he is made low; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away". No matter how rich a man may be, nor how carefully he may house his riches; his wealth shall ultimately pass away. It is when the summer sun rises in its burning heat that the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; and the grace and fashion of both of them perishes—"so shall the rich man fade away in his ways".

When the wrath of a just God, who is no respecter of persons, falleth on the man who puts his trust in riches, and who despises the mercy and the grace of God, he will be taken away. How remarkable is that story of the Lamb's wrath as set forth in Revelation 6: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, * * hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb".

Suppose a rich man refuses to be brought low, and instead, says to his soul, "Eat, drink and be merry"? The Lord will say, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided"?

Thus when a rich man sees himself brought low, while he falls at the feet of the Saviour, let him rejoice, for he shall be also exceedingly exalted with His Master, by and by.

All of us need to live this life with our eye placed on the next one. We need to weigh our present in its relation to our future.

The hog follows the man who leads him to the slaughter, because he sees no farther than his nose. He only knows that step by step the corn is falling. He sees the corn and follows, eating it, but he sees not the slaughter-house and the ax in the slayer's hand.

The ants are not so. In the summer they lay up for the winter. The hog lives for to-day the ant lives for to-morrow.

Multiplied thousands are, alas, more "hog like" than "ant like". God has called man "anthropos" an uplooker, and yet man walks looking down. Many see only the possible present three-score years and ten. They set their affections on the things beneath, they lay up treasures upon the earth, and they live looking at the things that are seen.

Dr. Len G. Broughton tells of a visit he made recently to the beautiful Luray Caves in Virginia. He said that at the first they did not seem attractive, until after they had walked far in and a bright light dispelling the darkness was thrown upon the

walls, then, there flashed out the magnesium light, which is the brightest light in the world, and all was beauty, glory, glory. So we need to catch the vision of another world, and, enraptured by its beauty we will gladly give up all of earth and live in anticipation of the glory that shall mark His Coming.

Thus, whether it be the poor man, the man of low degree, or the rich man, both may rejoice; and both may rejoice in the same thing. The first, because he is exalted; the second, because he is brought low, that he may be exalted in due time.

CHAPTER V.

THE FINISHED PICTURE

THE FINISHED PICTURE

James 1:12-15.

THE Scripture for to-day, James 1:12-15, carries with it two finished pictures. There is, first of all, the finished picture of righteousness and right living, which is reached by the victors over temptations and testings. There is, secondly, the finished picture of unrighteousness and evil living, which accrues to those who yield to divers lusts.

We have set for our task to-day the examination of these Divine portraitures. We propose to look at the "present" and the "future" of two kinds of living.

THE IMPORTANCE OF JUDGING THE PRESENT BY THE FUTURE

He who circumscribes his vision to the immediate vista is foolish indeed. Shall one stand by the seashore and judge the vast reaches of the Atlantic or Pacific, by what his eye can see at one glance? That would be consummate folly. There are reaches that lie leagues upon leagues beyond the scope of the natural eye, or even of the eye, aided by the strongest telescope.

Before one writes a dissertation upon the wonders of the ocean, let him sail the seas until he begins to grasp something of their sweep and sway.

He who judges life by the shore-line of any present experience, is foolish indeed. Life may be judged rightly, only after one has seen the far-flung stretches of the life to come.

The artist who sits at his easel, making his first

few daubs upon the canvass, is unwilling for anyone to judge his art, and his finished product by those early daubs.

Hasty and premature judgment is harsh and petty. Some there are, who live, looking only at the things which are seen. They never consider the harvest; they sow without thinking of what they may grow. Their only concern is the bird in the hand; they care nothing for the two in the bush. They never see beyond their noses. They lay their foundations without any concern as to the building that it must carry. They live to-day without thinking of to-morrow. They live in time, as though there was no eternity.

"What fools these mortals be" is a trite saying ofttimes loosely flung. But he who says, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry", without weighing the fun of to-day with the sorrows of to-morrow, is a fool of fools.

WHEN IT IS FINISHED

These words of Divine writ need to be pondered —"When it is finished". The song puts it this way, "What shall the Harvest Be?"

"Sowing the seed by the daylight fair,
Sowing the seed by the noonday glare
Sowing the seed by the fading light,
Sowing the seed in the solemn night;
Oh, what shall the harvest be?
Oh, what shall the harvest be?

Chorus:
"Sown in the darkness, or sown in the light,
Sown in our weakness, or sown in our might,
Gathered in time or eternity,
Sure, ah, sure, will the harvest be.

"Sowing the seed by the wayside high,
Sowing the seed on the rocks to die,
Sowing the seed where the thorns will spoil,
Sowing the seed in the fertile soil;
Oh, what shall the harvest be?
Oh, what shall the harvest be?

"Sowing the seed of a lingering pain,
Sowing the seed of a maddened brain,
Sowing the seed of a tarnished name,
Sowing the seed of eternal shame;
Oh, what shall the harvest be?
Oh, what shall the harvest be?"

The saint should weigh the words, "When it is finished", lest he become weary in his well doing, and faint by the way.

The sinner should weigh the words, "When it is finished", lest he continue in his evil-doing, and fatten himself in lust as the hog is fattened for the slaughter.

Let us thank God that we are not left to grope in darkness as to the future; the finished picture of both the good and the bad is given us of God.

God has unveiled the distant scenes; He has lifted the curtains and permitted us to look within. We may not see it all, but we are allowed to see enough to make the saints to rejoice, and the sinners to tremble.

Had God not told of what lies ahead, we might have become discouraged, as Christians, when the pressure of present testings and trials lay heavy against us. Had God not told the wicked of the finished picture of sin, they might none of them have turned from their evil ways.

As we proceed with our message may the Spirit give us hearing ears, and understanding hearts.

We have two things before us, and two things about each of these two things.

I. TWO THINGS ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN'S TESTINGS.

1. The Present Picture. Verse twelve speaks of "enduring temptation", and of, "when he is tried". This is the present picture of the faithful believer.

a. How does the world view this picture. The world bemoans us our lot. It is the source of our trials and testings, under Satan's hand, and then it insinuates that we are tried because we are forsaken of God.

This was the case in the fate of Job. The devil impugned Job's integrity. Then, under permission of God, the devil laid a heavy hand on Job. While Job's three false friends insinuated that God was against him, and was punishing him for his sins. Even Job's wife advised him to curse God and die.

The world is ready to urge that the Christian's lot is most unhappy. He is despised and rejected; He is persecuted and pursued; he is pressed by trials and tribulations.

Christ accepted this challenge and admitted its truth. He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation". He said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you". Paul granted the same thing. Paul said, "All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution".

How many a young Christian has felt the sting of the world's taunts as it cast out its reproach against him? The world asserts that the lot of the saved is a hard lot. They cannot do anything, go

anywhere, or, enjoy anything. The Christian life is decried as one robbed of satisfaction and happiness. It is bemoaned as a "hard lot."

In all of this the world forgets that the true saint glories in his present sufferings and counts them "all joy". The world knows nothing of the peace, the love, the joy, that thrills the heart of every faithful and persecuted saint. He sings mid his trials and rejoices mid his testings.

This leads us to our second step:

b. How the Christian views this present picture. The Christian may at times despair, and become dismal in his forebodings, but he should not. The believer should rejoice when all men revile him and say all manner of evil against him, falsely. The believer should sing where others sigh; and shout for joy where others weep for sorrow.

Hear David mid the shadows of Absalom's rebellion. It looked as though David's kingdom was falling and his life was about to be taken from him. On the night of David's flight, as he passed over the brook Kidron, he prayed and said, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me, round about". He also said, "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: Thy blessing is upon Thy people".

Hear Habakkuk: He spoke when the bottom seemed about to drop out of everything. He said: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation".

Hear Paul, as the storm had laid upon him for fourteen days and nights, and all hope that any should be saved had been given up; then Paul stepped forth and said, "Be of good cheer". Paul could rejoice even in a Philippian jail, while he lay on beaten back, with his feet in the stocks.

The Christian views the present trials and testings as blessings in disguise. He knows that they are working for him. He knows that they help to strengthen him, to establish him, to perfect him, to settle him.

The Christian sees the Lord walking over the tossing waves of his troubles and coming into his heart.

2. **The Future Picture.** There are no somber hues to the future picture of the Christian who has endured trials and who has victoriously passed through the billows of testing on the earth. What does James say? "When he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him".

When we stand in Glory wearing the crown of life, what will we care for the trials that once seemed so great, and so hard to meet?

Think not of Moses, as standing before the Lord, burdened with the great hordes of Israel who rose up at times against him, until in his straits he cried, "I am not able to bear this people alone"; but think of him, rather, as standing on the mount with Elijah in glory mid the marvels of Christ's transfiguration.

Think not of Abraham, as a pilgrim traveling out into an unknown country, and tenting his way along; but think of him as dwelling in the city

toward which he journeyed—the city whose Builder and Maker is God.

Think not of David fleeing from Saul, or facing the many testings that his life as king of Israel brought upon him, but think of him, as, in the Millenial glory, in conjunction with Christ the King of kings, he shall reign as prince.

Think not of the twelve disciples, as men of toil and testings in the days of the early Church, but think of them sitting on twelve thrones and judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Will Daniel bemoan the experiences of the "Lions' Den" episode, when he stands before the Bema of Christ to receive his rewards?

Will Ezra or Nehemiah regret the struggles in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, when they enter into the joys of their Lord?

Will Paul grieve over his many travails when he hears the "Well done," from the Master. He did not grieve on earth, how can he grieve in Heaven.

How blessed of the Lord to tell us of the crowns that await each faithful saint. If some worldling says, "What do you know of those crowns, you have never seen them"; that does not move us at all. We live in the unshaken trust that the promised glories of the redeemed are real.

God has spoken, and His promises He is able to fulfil. God has spoken, and God is true. His pictures are not overdrawn.

If the present creation, prepared by God for a race of men whom He knew would sin, are so glorious, how shall His preparations for His redeemed and faithful servants exceed in glory!

If the rivers of this earth are fair, what shall be the beauty of the river that proceedeth out of the throne of God, in the new earth?

If the trees which bear fruit down here are so great a joy, what will be the joy of those trees over there, which bear twelve manner of fruit, and yield their fruit every month?

If gold is precious now, what of the city, whose streets are pure gold, as clear as transparent glass? If pearls are of great value now, remember that the twelve gates of Heaven's metropolis will be each a several pearl.

Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, journeyed mid the travails of earth looking for a city whose builder and maker is God.

Moses met his difficulties and deprivations, and endured, because his eye of faith saw Him who is invisible; and he lived having respect to the recompense of the reward.

David, mid his trials and testings, had the Lord always before his face. He said, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness".

Whatever may happen let us, as Christians, never lose sight of the finished picture". The joys that are set before us, make us count the present sorrows as nothing. We will gladly endure our cross and despise our shame, for we shall yet stand by the side of the Lord our God, owned and crowned.

Let the tempests roll, and the thunders roar, what care we—we are no more than so-journers here, and Heaven is our Home.

Let the dark clouds hover round, we live in the light that shines so wondrously above them.

Let martyrdom itself be our lot, yet our eye will

look through fagots and fire to the rich rewards that await us in Heaven.

For our part we would choose even the **present picture** of the Christian's lot in preference to the present lot of the sinner. We have the promise of the life **that now is.** In spite of all that opposes, of all that falls to our lot, we can even now out-sing and out-praise the world. Sin holds no present-time advantage over righteousness. The sinner has no right to out-claim the saint in earth blessings and joys. He may do many things we may not do, but we have many things he cannot have. We have Christ, He is without Christ and God in the world. We have peace, he has no rest. We have a "Comforter", he has no comforter.

We insist that the lot of the Christian, is, under any condition, to be preferred, even on this earth, and in this life, to the lot of the sinner. But what will it be over there when the picture is finished and we enter into the joy of our Lord?

II. TWO THINGS ABOUT THE UNBELIEVER'S LUSTINGS.

1. The Present Picture. James speaks in verse 14, of the sinner being "drawn away of his own lust, and enticed". This is the present picture, and it presents two things.

a. THE LUSTINGS OF THE SINNER HIMSELF. In speaking along this line, the Spirit, through Paul, says:—"The old man which is corrupt through deceitful lusts". Lusts are the evil desires of the flesh. Lusts are the promptings of the "old man".

The lusts of the flesh, with the lust of the eyes

and the pride of life constitute the things of the world.

In what do they consist? We would say that they include everything that a heart of sin passionately desires. They are the things that men count gain.

Solomon sought out all of these things. He tasted every cup of the pleasures of sin and drank most of them to the full. He proved mirth and enjoyed pleasure, but called them vanity. He said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doeth it? He gave himself to wine, and laid hold upon folly. Everything that his eyes desired he kept not from them; he withheld not his heart from any joy.

The world might imagine Solomon supremely happy, and no doubt for a while he did have a certain joy; but e'er long he wrote, "Therefore I hated my life". He called it all "vanity and a striving after wind".

The lustings of the sinner may, when satisfied, yield pleasure—we do not deny that at all; but we do deny that they yield abiding joy. The eyes of the ungodly may stand out in fatness; they may even luxuriate in their sin, but the sorrows and the sighs of sin by far outweigh its songs.

b. THE ENTICEMENT WHICH COMES FROM WITHOUT. James said, "When he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed". Satan is the power without, who, through his many instrumentalities, entices the sinner to satisfy his lusts.

It was the devil who showed the Lord the kingdoms of this world and the glories of them. It was the devil who said, "All of these will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me". We do

not hesitate to say that Satan is still at this same work. He is the one who tempts men to satisfy the desires of their flesh and of their mind.

How wonderfully he can paint the glories of this age. He comes as an angel of light, his angels come as ministers of righteousness. Together they connive to deceive the whole race.

2. The Future Picture. Sin has its pleasures, this we admit. However we urge that they are for a season, and not forever.

We have just noticed how Satan paints the present of sin's pictures with roseate colors, but he blinds the eyes of the unbelieving to its sad finality. Two things the devil hates: First he hates the glories of the redeemed in Heaven, the finished picture of the righteous; and next, he hates the sorrows of the damned in hell, the finished picture of the wicked.

Let not the sinner think that he shall escape the judgment of God. Let him not think that he shall see the light of life. "Woe to those who laugh now, they shall mourn and weep".

Sin's present picture is sad enough, sin's finished picture is sad beyond expression.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AUTHOR OF ALL GOOD

THE AUTHOR OF ALL GOOD

James 1:16-20.

THE brethren to whom James wrote were very dear unto his heart. He bore the deepest concern as to their correctness of spiritual conception. He said, "Do not err, my beloved brethren".

It was Paul who wrote to the Philippians saying, "I have you in my heart". These words of James carry the same complexion. Is there not in the lack of love, the cause of many a failure in the pulpit? Some have no abiding love for those to whom they minister.

James would give a warning to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, but in giving it he would urge upon them first his tender love, in the bonds of the Gospel. He would call them brethren, placing them upon a par of spiritual life with himself, but he would also call them his **beloved** brethren.

Wherein had the beloved brethren erred? We believe in this: The twelve tribes were scattered abroad. They were buffeted about through many trials and tribulations (this we saw in the earlier verses of the chapter). Because of this the beloved brethren were in danger of displeasure from their God. James even calls it "wrath" in verse 20.

In order to meet this need of his erring brethren the Spirit leads James to give, (1) A renewed vision of God as the Author of all good: (2) A remembrance of God as the One who had begotten them with His Word of Truth; (3) A request that they be slow to wrath and swift to hear and to re-

ceive the Word of God. Let us try to cover this threefold statement in to-day's message.

I. A RENEWED VISION OF GOD, AS THE AUTHOR OF ALL GOOD.

We do not hesitate in saying that Satan is the author of **all** evil. If some one reminds us that "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust"; and, if they urge that lust begets sin, and sin bringeth forth death; then, we immediately concur. Yet we still hold to our first position.

We know that without the continuance of a personal devil, there is the possibility of all misery from sin, deep-rooted in the heart of sinful man. Were Satan chained and every fallen angel and demon annihilated, the race could not thus be saved. The heart is now corrupt. Out of the heart of man proceedeth every evil thing and every evil result. We know all of this.

Back of groans and tears, of sighs and pains, is the **deed** of sin, the **works** of iniquity; back of the deed of sin and the works of iniquity is the **lust,** the **evil desires,** the **corrupt** heart of the sinner. Yet, back of all these, back of the sighs and pain; back of the deed of sin, and the works of iniquity; back of the heart of lust, is **Satan** and his wiles. Back of all, is that first fell stroke of the devil, when he stood in the Garden of Eden and defaming the Word of God, and insinuating against the love of God for man, he said, "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil".

The "brethren scattered abroad", however, were

in danger of something far worse than a misconception of the source of their pains; they were in danger of blaming God for their sufferings.

In this, those Christian Jews stand not alone. Alas, until this hour there are many who lay upon the Lord the blame of every sorrow and every pain that befalls their lot. This we will consider more fully in our third division. We must meet this whole matter as the Holy Spirit, in James, met it. But, for the moment, and first of all, let us see God as

THE AUTHOR OF ALL GOOD

Hear the ringing testimony of James,

> "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning".

1. James Says That Every Good Gift Is From God. The Spirit does not teach that God is the Author of our **greater** blessings, or of **some** of our good things, but of **all.** He says also that all of these "blessings", and all of these "good things" are **gifts** from **God.** They come to us in pure grace, and apart from any worth as from us.

"The **gift** of God is **Eternal Life".** But that is not all. "The **Holy Spirit** which God hath **given** to them that obey Him". But that is not all. **"Every good gift", every perfect gift".** That is all. "All things are yours". But from whence do they come? **God** "hath **given** us **all things** richly to enjoy".

Beloved, we ought to bend the knee in worship, and praise His Name. We have nothing that we have not received. Back of every blessing is God; and every blessing is the **gift** of God.

Everything that is good: everything good in the realm of the temporal, everything good in the realm of the eternal, everything is from God. Has Satan given us nothing that is good? If he has given us any good thing, it is given from that which belongs to God. Satan may, seemingly, hand out some good—but he is only a usurper and a deceiver, claiming to give his own, when he is no more than passing on God's good.

Men may, in folly, claim that their own hand hath brought them good. However, when we get to the depth of it all, we know that we have nothing that is good, that we have not received from God.

2. James Tells Us That God Is the Father of Lights. We have a confession to make. When we were asked by Brother W. B. Musselman (the man of God who is, under God, the head of the great publishing house, the Union Gospel Press), to send in a series of sermons on the Epistle of James, we somewhat dreaded the task, because, as, in the past, we have read over the Book, we have thought it was so disconnected and disjointed in its presentation of truth, that we imagined our messages would carry no continuity of thought. We now plead our ignorance, and beg forgiveness. God is not the Author of confusion. We now see that every statement in the Epistle of James is builded in perfect harmony and symmetry. The Spirit in James 1:17 is meeting the misconceptions which the saints to whom He writes, had of their divers temptations, as described in James 1:2.

Why does the Spirit just now speak of God as the **Father of Lights?** Because the **Giver of all good gifts** must be the **Father of Lights.** It is from

darkness that evil comes, and not from light. God is not the Author of dark days, and dismal forebodings, because darkness does not spring from light. "God is **light**, and in Him is no darkness at all". "Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil".

He that walks in darkness never walks with God, for God is light. Did not Christ say, "I am the **Light** of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life". In the New Jerusalem there shall be no darkness at all. God giveth them **light**, and "the Lamb is the **light** thereof".

3. James Tells Us That God Never Varies, Never Changes. God is "the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning". This is his final argument that God is the giver of all good, and never the Author of evil. God cannot tempt men to sin, because He cannot Himself be tempted. If God could be light to-day, and darkness to-morrow, then God could be the giver of sorrow and of pain. But God never changes. He is the same yesterday and to-day and forever. The earth may swerve in its axis, but God never swerves. Spheres might sooner leave their God-marked path through space, than for God to leave His path of right.

How the world needs this new or rather this renewed vision of God. Away with the suggestion that God is the Author of human pangs. In the city of God, when sin shall have been put down, and Satan and all of his hordes shall have been forever placed in outer darkness, then there shall be "no night there". And since there is all of light,

and none of night, the Spirit can say, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away".

Some may wish to cavil. Some at least may not understand. They will want to assert that God does send sorrow and pain, because He sends punishment—"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth". Beloved, where is he who will dare assert that the chastenings of God are sent because God is the author of pain? Everyone of us knows that the chastening of saints and indeed the punishment of sinners is all due to sin. The wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness, because unrighteousness worketh evil, and God is the Author of good; because unrighteousness worketh sorrow, and God is the Author of peace.

Hear me! Over all of the agonies of hell and over all of the woes of the damned, God has written, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked". God "is not willing that any should perish". The damned in the torments of hell can never say, "God did it". They will know that they are in hell because they continued in their sin, against every call of God and plea of God to give them life and light.

God's judgments only allow sin to reap its own fruitage. Is eternal life the gift of God? Yes. A thousand times, yes. Is death, and hell, and sin, and pain, the gift of God? No! A thousand times, **NO!** "The wages of sin is death". James put it this way, **"Sin when it is finished bringeth forth**

death"; but God is **Light, and the Giver of every good and perfect gift".**

II. A REMEMBRANCE OF GOD AS THE ONE WHO HAD BEGOTTEN THEM WITH HIS WORD OF TRUTH.

James is multiplying argument. He says God is the giver of every good and perfect gift. But God is also, the **Begetter of Life.**

James would remind the troubled saints among the twelve tribes scattered abroad, that God not alone gives them all the good that they enjoy, but that God is the Author of the new life that they possess.

We who are given to varied complaints against God, should stop first to consider that we are begotten of God. Several things are emphasized by our text:

1. Saints Are Sons by the Will of God. The saved are not saved because they wrought out, or sought out their own salvation. Had God left them alone they never would have been born again. The whole plan of redemption was wrought out by God. It is all, all, all, inclosed in the **will of God.** Man had no part in his own redemption. Weigh the word—**no part.** You say man had to receive, believe, accept. To be sure; but he accepted a redemption fashioned and finished in the **will** of God.

For our part we take the stand that even the faith that received, or believed, or accepted, was the gift of God.

The Spirit puts it this way in John 1:13: "Which

were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God".

The Spirit puts it this way in Ephesians, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of **His will,** to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein **He hath made** us accepted in the Beloved".

The Spirit puts it this way in Romans: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? **It is God that justifieth".**

2. Saints Are Sons through the Word of God. "He begat us with the Word of Truth". This is the message of verse 18. Verse 21 adds, "Receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls". We take it that James is saying, "Your new life was begotten by the Word of God; now abide in this Word of God, and receive its testimony concerning God as the Giver of every good gift, and you will save your souls,—that is, your lives will be saved from misconceptions and from a thousand complaints.

Just a moment however on the first statement. We are born again by the Word of God. The Word is a **Living** Word. It is not a corruptible seed—it liveth and abideth forever. Does this expression, "the Word of Truth", refer to the Bible? We would say, Yes. However, we would say more than "yes". Far back in the beginning God said, "Let there be light, and there was light". When God spoke it was so. Now we are begotten children of God by the will of God, followed by the Word of God. God speaks and His will is

done. But how does God speak? He speaks through His written Word. His written Word is subsequent to but not different to His eternal Word. The Word of God was co-eternal with the will of God, but the Word of God was written by holy men moved by the Holy Ghost. Thus God has handed to His ministers a **Living Word** capable of begetting **Life.**

How sacredly we should ponder the pages of the Bible, and present its truths! "The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart".

If we believed more in the efficacy of the **Word,** we would preach it more, and depend on its workings **more.** "So shall My Word be that proceedeth out of My mouth, it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please". That is another way of saying, "My will is set in motion and made effective by My Word.

3. As Sons Saints Take Precedent over All of God's Creatures. Angels are created of God and dear to the heart of God. Saints, however, are sons of God, and born of God. That which is born is flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone; and those **begotten** and **born** come into a marvelous relationship to the begetter. James says they are a "kind of **firstfruits** of His creatures". Let us rejoice in our position. Even now we have the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father".

III. A REQUEST THAT WE BE SLOW TO WRATH, AND SWIFT TO HEAR.

James is now, in the Holy Spirit, drawing His conclusions. He says, since we have received every good and perfect gift from God, and since we are even begotten of the will of God, and through the Word of God, we should, therefore, "Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath".

Shall saints strike the hand, from whom all their blessings flow? Shall we contemn the God who has been our all in all? If we do not understand His dealings or comprehend our trials and testings, let us lie low with closed lips, and trust where we cannot understand. James gives a threefold plea.

1. Be Swift to Hear. That is, let every one listen intently to the voice of God. How many of our misconceptions would have been done away, had we followed this holy injunction. We are too quick with our judgments; we speak of that we do not know, and testify of that which we have not seen. This should not be so.

If we will listen to God we shall learn much. Our ears should be always open to His voice, through His Word.

2. Be Slow to Speak. It is so easy to talk and to jabber about things which we have not fully weighed. We give our opinions where we should have no opinion, because of the lack of our knowledge. We give our think-sos as though they were a final authority. We even speak to God, when we had far better listen to what He has to say.

3. Be Slow to Wrath. Some even go so far as to condemn God, or to malign His actions, before

God has had a chance to show all of what He is doing. We are hasty with conclusions. What is the result of such a "wrath"? James says this: "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God". Every time a believer speaks unkindly about God, or is at all angry with God, he is working against the righteous dealings of God. Paul wrote of the words of the Jews: "The Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you".

Truly the Spirit has made clear His message through James. We should not blame God for the trials which pursue us.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WORD OF GOD

THE WORD OF GOD

JAMES says three salient things to us about the Word of God:

1. In verse 18 we read that we are begotten by the Word of Truth.

2. In verse 21 we save our lives by receiving the engrafted Word.

3. In verse 25 we are blessed in our deed by doing the Word and the work.

The first two of these we touched in our previous sermon. We will now enlarge upon them in order that we may the better appreciate the fuller study we wish to give the third statement.

I. WE ARE BEGOTTEN BY THE WORD OF TRUTH.

The Word of God is a Living Word because it begets life.

That which is dead cannot impart life. There is no power known to man, and we believe that we are safe in saying known to God that can produce life unless it is, itself, living. This is the plan of God.

The egg that produces the chick must be a fertile egg. The seed of corn which produces first the shoot, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear, must be a living seed.

We might have difficulty in dissecting the "germ of life" from the egg; or of dissecting the "life-giving function" from the corn, but we all admit that it is there.

We may have difficulty in dissecting the life-

giving power from the Word of God, but we who have felt its working know it is there.

Other books may inspire life, the Bible begets life. Other books may sparkle with wisdom, the Bible sparkles with being. There is no book other than the Bible that is "living".

1. A Few Proofs That the Bible Is a LIVING Word.

(a) THE BIBLE IS LIVING BECAUSE IT IS EVERGREEN. It never decays, never disintegrates, never becomes old, never dies. It contains a freshness that is inexplicable. The most fascinating book from the pen of man grows stale. We tire of its reading. The novel has its day, but it passes. Even books, like some of the ancient classics that have withstood the ravages of time, are read only to be set aside.

(b) THE BIBLE IS LIVING BECAUSE IT THROBS WITH POWER. It is a dynamic that never runs down. It is vibrant with force. Cicero's oration, spoken or printed, might have stirred the Romans, and Demosthenes' words may have fired the Greeks, but their words flared up like a photographer's flashlight, only to die away. The Bible never dies; its power never fades. The Word of God that turned Athens upside down when Paul pronounced it, still turns cities and worlds upside down.

(c) THE BIBLE IS LIVING BECAUSE IT PRODUCES LIFE. It is like the rain or the snow that cometh down from Heaven, and causeth the earth to bring forth and bud, but it is more than that. It is the seed that the rain and snow causes to germinate.

Of all the saved, none have been saved apart from the Word of God. Philosophy may instruct, but the Bible begets. "Being **born again** by the Word of God, that **liveth** and abideth for ever".

We insist that we cannot explain what we say—that is, we cannot tell how the life is begotten by the Word. The truth is that we cannot explain any life, whether vegetable, or animal; human, or Divine; but we believe in life.

> "Flower in a crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannie,
> And hold you here, in my hand, little flower,
> Root and branch and all in all."

Until I can explain **what** the flower is, and **how** it is,—in its root and its branch and its all in all, I need not attempt to explain either the **what** or the **how** of the new birth. However, we all, who have it, know that that **life of God** throbs in our spirit, and we cry, "Father, Father."

II. THE ENGRAFTED WORD SAVES THE SOUL.

This statement, as we take it, has to do not with the production of life, but with its preservation. The same Word that begets, nourishes, and builds up, and strengthens, and invigorates.

When we neglect the Living Word we are in danger of being swept away by the cunning craftiness of men and by their evil doctrines whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

When we neglect the daily study of the Word, and we refuse to let it dwell richly in our hearts, we are in danger not only of remaining babes in Christ, but we are in danger of being burdened by mis-conceptions of truth. James is enforcing upon

the brethren in the twelve tribes scattered abroad, that they will never understand God's dealings and the trials that beset them, unless they receive with meekness the engrafted Word.

The "saving" of the life reaches beyond the "begetting" of the life, and the "possession" of life. Christ taught that he that would save his life should lose it, and that he that would lose it for His sake should find it. The life in the sense Christ used it, and in which James is now using it, suggests the testimony, the experiences, the accomplishments, the possible fruitfulness of the time which lies between the period of our new begetting, and of our presentation before God at the close of our earth sphere. We do not want to lose the days and the years that God has vouchsafed to us. We want to save our lives, make them count for God. We want to redeem the time as wise, and not to squander it as fools.

If we neglect the engrafted Word we will stand before Him ashamed; if we receive it in meekness we shall save our lives, and find them fruitful at His Coming.

III. THE DOING OF THE WORD BRINGS BLESSING.

This part of our theme is the main consideration for to-day. It begins with verse 22, and concludes with verse 27. We will follow the Spirit's message step by step.

1. He Who Hears and Does Not. There are some we fear who imagine that the Bible is written to be memorized, or as the basis for a creed to be adopted. We certainly would not belittle either of

these things, but when all an individual has, is a knowledge of the Word, or an announced conviction as to the teaching of the Word, he lacks a most vital factor.

(a) He Who Merely Hears the Word, but Does It Not Deceives Himself. He may imagine that he is all right because he sits under the Gospel message, but such is not the case. The seed lying on top of the ground does not make a harvest. The seed must take root and spring forth e'er it can grow.

A deceived heart is the pitiful lot of many. The multitudes come to the house of God, they sit before the Lord with God's people, as though they were His people; they hear His words, but they will not do them; with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after covetousness. God is to them as a lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, or of one who plays well on an instrument, for they hear God's words, but they **do them not.**

A heart thus deceived within itself, calls itself religious. It holds to a form of Godliness, but knows nothing of its power. It has an outward display of religion, but has no inward possession of Christ.

A life that does not make faith vital in deeds, is not only self-deceived, but it lies exposed to every false wind of doctrine. He who knows the truth but does it not, will be easily swept from his moorings. He will be like the grain that sprang up quickly and then withered away, because it had no deepness of soil and of root.

(b) He Who Hears the Word and Does It Not

Will Forget What He Hears. Our text says, "He is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was".

Truth to become vital and made a part of one's very being, must be truth obeyed. James had told the brethren the Word of God concerning their trials, but the brethren needed to put his message into practice, if they would profit by their hearing.

Matthew is led to write along this same line, as he quotes the words of the Saviour: "Every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it".

When Christ had finished His sayings we read that "the people were astonished at His doctrine; for He taught them as One having authority, and not as the scribes". Mark it—the people did just what the Lord Jesus had warned them not to do. They heard, and were astonished, then they went their way to forget it all, because they did not at once receive His words into honest hearts and seek to live them out.

No matter how wonderful or how precious truth may be, it must be lived out to become effective. Some there are who hold, intellectually, to the great principles of prophetic truth. They would tell you that they are firm believers in the Pre-millennial Coming of the Lord, yet they live and act the contrary every day. They say the Lord

may come at any moment, yet they live and act as though He would never come; and they begin to eat and to drink with the drunken. They say the Lord's Coming is at hand, and that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth; then they turn around and make their plans and set their stakes as though the Lord were never to come. They say that "evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse", that "iniquity will abound" and then they turn right-about-face and join every worldly organization set for world-betterment. They say that the work of the church in this age is to take out of the nations a people for His Name, and then they enter into all sorts of schemes to "take the world for Christ." Oh, consistency, thou art a jewel, made precious by thy scarcity.

The Book of Revelation is strong on this very point. It says, in the third verse of its first chapter: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and **keep** those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand".

We add James' warning: "If any man be a hearer of the Word (even this more sure word of prophecy) and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man He was".

2. He Who Hears and Does. How refreshing it is to leave the false, the mere tinkling of bells, and to come into the real and the genuine. James continued:

> "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed".

(a) We Have Here a New Name for the Word of God. James calls it the perfect Law of Liberty. Some may cough and blush at the word "Law" and immediately want to cast James overboard, because they will say we are not under "Law". Brethren, hear the Word of God more carefully: **God's Word is the LAW OF LIBERTY.** None of us wish to be entangled again in the yoke of bondage. We know that the flesh cannot walk in the Spirit; we know the natural man cannot fulfil the life of the spiritual man; we know that we are not under Law for righteousness for by Grace have we been saved.

However, it is a marvelous thing for saints to come into the realm of the **Law of Liberty.** Not the Law of Liberty to sin, but of liberty to do the right. Keeping James' expression in its context, it is not difficult to see that where saints enter into the place of obedience to the Word, into the keeping and the doing of the Word, they enter into the glory of **liberty** all around them. They bear the yoke of the Lord, but they find it light. They do the will of the Lord, but they find it easy. They walk not as the Gentiles walk; but they are not legal separatists, struggling against the encroachments of their flesh and of their mind. They walk aright, but they walk in **liberty.** Is not love the fulfilling of the Law? It is; but it is the fulfilling of the Law, apart from pugilistic endeavor. It fulfils the Law because the natural outflow of love is the fulfilling of the Law.

Here are the saints to whom James wrote. They were under great trials of affliction. James writes them that as they **hear** and **do** God's Word, they

will find themselves luxuriating in the "Law of Liberty". They will think aright and act aright, without an effort, all because they are doers of the Word.

(b) We Have, Secondly, a Statement as to **how** the Law of Liberty Works. It works under a two-fold condition.

First, there must be a "Looking into this perfect Law of Liberty". The man to enjoy the position into which the Law of Liberty lifts him, must first see into the working of the Law. How can we see it? We can see it, doctrinally. We have just tried to elucidate its doctrinal meaning. Then, we can see it practically, as we see it at work in the lives of other saints.

If any one of that day wanted to **look** into the perfect Law of Liberty, particularly liberty in the midst of trials, they might have studied its **doctrinal** statement as set forth in the two Epistles of Peter. He gives the enlarged picture of what James is now summing up in one brief expression, "the perfect Law of Liberty".

If any one had wanted to see the Law of Liberty at work mid trials they might have watched Paul in the Philippian jail and hear a few of the songs and shouts of both Paul and Silas as they lay with bruised backs, and with their feet in the stocks.

Second, there is the "continuing therein". Not only **looking** but continuing; not only seeing, but living; not only knowing, but doing.

Paul wrote, "Having therefore obtained help from God, I **continue** unto this day". What is help for? It is not given to breed helplessness. Help is for service. You might say that healing is for

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health. Not a bit of it. God does not heal any one in order that they may be well. He heals them that they may do just what Peter's wife's mother did, when she was healed,—"She arose and ministered unto them".

We get into the Law of Liberty that we may **walk** therein. That we may **manifest** its power and demonstrate its meaning.

3. He Who Hears and Works. It almost took our breath as we observed how the Holy Spirit in James quietly slipped from the expression "a doer of the **Word**" as seen in verse 22, into a "doer of the **work**", as seen in verse 25.

This change was not accidental, a mere slip; neither was it written for alliteration or for beauty of expression. The change demonstrates that doing the **Word** and doing the **work** are indissolubly linked. He that is a doer of the Word, is, of necessity, a doer of the work.

(a) A Doer of the Work Who Does Not Do the Word Will Make a Mess of His Work. That is why we read, **A workman** that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the **Word** of truth". We see, therefore that while the **Word** and **Work** are so closely allied, yet there is a distinction. James **first** emphasized "doing the **Word**" and then afterward he said, "Doing the work."

Hear us: Any doing of the work, that is not based on a plain and positive doing of the Word is sure to be a failure.

No workman can escape being ashamed, if he does not rightly divide the Word of Truth.

Here is another wonderful statement: "No man

is crowned except he strive lawfully". How sadly this warning is needed just now.

Let us set a preacher before us. He prays (we have done it ourselves, we fear) before he preaches, "O God give Thy servant power and add Thy blessing to the message of this hour." Then after a song, the preacher, figuratively speaking, rolls up his sleeves and goes to work. His first words are: "The message that we bring to-day is the message of world-wide redemption. The Church is panoplied and sent forth to save the world."

Do you catch our point? The man asked God to bless his work, and then he started to preach directly contrary to the **Word** of God. He said the Church is to save the world, whereas God has said that the mission of the Church is to take **out** of the nations a people for His Name.

Beloved, example upon example of preaching contrary to the Word would not be hard to find. How then can the Spirit bless? He who is doer of the work, must first be a doer of the Word.

We find our time is exhausted, so we will continue next Sunday, with the application of this text, as seen in the next two verses.

CHAPTER VIII.

PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION

PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION

THE word "religion" is very common among men. It carries with it no more than the adherence to some form of faith, be it Christian or pagan. The heathen is often more religious than the Christian.

The Apostle Paul was greatly stirred in his spirit when he saw the whole city of Athens given to idolatry. They not only had gods many, but for fear that they had missed one, they had an altar with this inscription, "To the unknown God". The Athenians were religious, very religious, altogether too religious, but they were ignorant of God and of His Son Jesus Christ.

The object of our sermon for this hour is not, however, to discuss the false religions, but the **true** religion.

True religion may be discussed from its doctrinal view-point—that is one thing. James is about to discuss it from the view-point of the practical. Religion not in its creed but in its fruitage.

Beyond doubt we should contend for the faith once delivered, but we should not over-look the life.

Paul wrote to Timothy, "Take heed to thyself, and to the doctrine".

WHERE THE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED

Let no one say that it does not matter what you believe just so your heart is right. That is untrue, because no one can live right, who believes wrong.

James has not neglected to place emphasis on the **Word,** but he stresses the **Word at work.**

We rejoice in every effort for the true faith. Among those known as "fundamentalists" there is a gracious and a great contention for truth as against error: this is as it should be. However contending for the faith in the correctness of its statements, is not all our lot.

If in modernistic theology we see an attack against the faith; should we not see in the modern conception of morals an attack against the standard of Christian living, just as serious in its results.

For our part we are beginning to dread the sweep of loose living far more than that of loose believing. We grant the former is the fruitage of the latter, and that we need to doctor the fountain, but we surely need also to set up our standards against the sweep and the sway of worldly lusts.

We have varied organizations set for the defense of the faith; but where are the organizations set for the defense of the life?

Where is the denominational convention or presbytery or conference that sounds forth a clear and clarion call for saints to return to the New Testament standard of conduct? We meet and draw swords against error in doctrines, while all the while the church is being swept from its moorings by errors of moral conceptions.

The first we should have done, the second we should not have overlooked. The world has become alarmed at its own rottenness and it is trying to fight its own iniquity; but the church is neg-

lectful of the New Testament demands for right standards of life.

JAMES PLACES THE EMPHASIS ON RIGHT LIVING

The Holy Spirit in the Epistle of James does not make one incorrect doctrinal statement; nor does He overlook the demand for right conceptions of truth; however the Spirit in the Book of James is pressing home the **doing** of the **Word** and not the hearing only.

We fear that some have thought that James is alone in this contention—this is altogether a mistake. Every Epistle of Paul is builded upon a two-fold contention. First the **doctrine** is stated and then the **duty** is made plain. By way of example take Ephesians, after the doctrine is established in three chapters; chapter four begins, "I therefore, * * beseech you that ye walk worthy".

Will you all hear and heed this admonition—**walk worthy** of the creed you profess?

May we preach the grace of God? We may. In fact the grace of God is a very vital factor of good doctrine. However, we need to remember that the grace of God teaches "us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world".

He who preaches "grace" but does not preach what "grace teaches" is giving out an emasculated Gospel.

The pulpit, the orthodox pulpit, the fundamentalist pulpit, is as a whole sadly neglecting the no uncertain call of God for righteousness in the daily walk and life.

In proof of this we ask, where is "church discipline"? Generally speaking there is no one excluded from church fellowship no matter what they do or how they live. It seems now that the sentiment of "live as you list and go to Heaven at last," is rather predominant.

We readily grant that the church has never been given a broom with which to sweep out the filth of the world's streets. Personally we have no sympathy and take no part in the great "reform program" put across by some so-called evangelists. "Clean up the city" is far from a Scriptural motto. The work of the pulpit, so far as the unsaved are concerned, is a work of regeneration, and not of subjugation or reformation.

However when it comes to the church, and to the saints who compose it, the preacher dare not put the soft peddle on unholy and unclean living.

The church should sweep its own floors and keep its very portals free from pollution.

If we are asked to what length the church should proceed in its enforcement of separation and right living, we can only carry the questioner to the unerring Word of God. We have no right to set up our own standards and demand that men of God accept them. Such a desire is far from us. What we do insist is this; that there are standards of conduct upon which saints may have fellowship with each other, and there are standards of bad conduct upon which fellowship should be broken.

The study of James will give us much of the positive and no less of the negative side of this question. Before we have dared to make any statements of our own, or to set up any standards of our

own, let us look into the ideals and demands of this Book written by the finger of God. This task we can by no means complete in one study. We will begin to-day, and continue in the messages that follow, until we have passed through the whole Book, picking out here a little and there a little, as we are able to discover what God has to say.

I. A SEEMING RELIGION.

James begins his message in chapter 1, verse 26, with the words, "If any man among you seem to be religious".

How suggestive is this expression: "Seem to be religious". According to this there is a religion that is counterfeit. It is not counterfeit to the extent that all men cast it off as such. It has every appearance of being genuine—such an one **seems** to be religious.

This should help many of us in the discussion of what is commonly called "falling from grace". We concede to anyone that a **so-called** Christian may fall away from a "seeming salvation". For this very reason we dare not base a doctrine on an experience that seems to acclaim it. Why teach individual apostasy, in the sense that the truly regenerate can lose their salvation, merely because some one who once **seemed** to be religious, and was very active in church life, finally fell away and died a reprobate and a sinner? It would be better far to take the Spirit's statement in John's Epistle, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would **no doubt** have continued with us; but they went out that

they might be made manifest that they were not all of us".

Alas, alas, many there are who are going religiously to hell. Men and women who are held in high esteem in the church, should stop and look at foundations. Are they on the solid rock? Have they had a definite experience of grace?

It is easy to deceive one's self. Religion may be had, as men see religion, without having Christ.

There was a certain house from which the demons had taken their departure. The house was swept and garnished. The excluded demon finally returned bringing with him seven demons worse than himself. The latter end of that man was worse than the first. What was the great lack in this house, as Bunyan called it, this Man-soul? Here was the lack: Christ was not in. The demon went out, but Christ had not been welcomed **in.** No wonder the demon recruited seven other demons, and they eight came in and took possession.

God pity the one with a **seeming** faith, particularly when he has deceived his own heart, as well as the hearts of others.

II. THE MARK OF A SEEMING RELIGION.

We are sure that none of us would have placed as a mark of a seeming religion what the Spirit here places.

We would have said, "If any man seemeth to be religious, and goeth to the theater, or to the movies, or, and danceth, or, and curseth, or, and taketh his dram, or, and something else that is morally evil and unclean; his religion is vain. The Spirit might have said a hearty Amen, to such

statements, but He said none of these things, in this Scripture.

What the Spirit did say is this: "If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and **bridleth not his tongue".**

Just now we will not enlarge upon this particular sin, because the 4th chapter of James discusses it in full, and we will hold it in reserve for a later message.

However, we have a few potent questions to ask. What is there that will divulge the inner heart of a man better than the tongue? Is it not out of the fullness of the heart that the mouth speaketh?

Does the stream not tell the nature of the fountain, and the fruit the nature of the tree? We may not be able to examine the roots of everything, but we can, without difficulty, examine the fruits.

When James said, "And bridleth not his tongue", he was speaking in reference to fruits.

There is no better way to know what is in man than to discover what proceedeth out of his lips.

III. A SEEMING RELIGION IS A VAIN RELIGION.

When God wanted to assure Ananias that Paul's conversion was genuine, He summed it up in one terse expression, "Behold, he prayeth". When God wanted to say that one possessed a religion that was vain, He summed it up in one terse expression: "He bridleth not his tongue".

Of course many who have a vain religion, deceive many by the glib, orthodox way in which they talk. You say with their tongues they show much love. Granted. But such talk is "put on."

They may even make long prayers, but their prayers are not the expression of their inner consciousness, for they **make** them, **fabricate** them. They make them the same way that men make clothes to cover up their nakedness. They make them that they may appear unto men to be religious.

Trees **may** have good fruit tied upon them in an ingenious way, so that the tree deceives the people as to its real nature. Words may be put on. It is not the fabricated words that tell the story of the inner heart, it is the unguarded, natural flow of the heart, as it appears on the surface in words of natural color and force.

What greater sorrow than to be the possessor of a vain religion. A religion that may be accepted by men, but which is rejected by God. A religion that may be current on earth, but is not current in Heaven.

IV. PURE RELIGION DESCRIBED.

Now that the Lord takes up the manifestations of pure religion, we may be surprised that He does not say what we naturally would, particularly, after we have discussed the test of "seeming" and "vain" religion. If vain religion is manifested by an unbridled tongue, why should not pure religion be manifested by a bridled tongue? Well it may, but only in part. It is because of the perfidy of the human heart and its desire to deceive, that the Spirit demands further tests. In John's First Epistle he speaks of those **who say,** they walk in the light; and of those **who say** they have fellowship with Christ; and of those who say that they have

not sinned, or, who say that they have no sin. The Epistle instructs us to go beyond such words, and discover the walk.

Mark this distinction: **An unbridled tongue is a mark of a vain religion, but a bridled tongue is not, necessarily, the mark of a pure religion.** An evil tree cannot bear good fruit, but it can falsify and pretend to bear good fruit. A good tree cannot bear evil fruit, and a good tree would have no reason to falsify and to pretend to bear bad fruit. It is easy to see why the bad might affect goodness, but not why the good might affect badness.

Thus James gives other proofs than a bridled tongue, for the test of pure religion. Here are James' proofs.

V. THE VISITING OF THE FATHERLESS AND THE WIDOW IN THEIR AFFLICTION.

When Jesus Christ was on earth He moved among the needy. His ear was open to the cry of the oppressed. When Jesus Christ shall come again, "with righteousness shall He Judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth". "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped". How gracious will be the care of the Lord for His own: "Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you".

The Lord Jesus sought out the poor and the needy when he walked among men. He was particularly kind to the widow of Nain.

He who possesses the spirit of the Lord Jesus will also care for those who are afflicted. What

did the Holy Spirit say in the Epistle of John? "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him"?

VI. THE KEEPING OF HIMSELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.

He that saith he hath faith, ought himself so to walk, even as He walked. The very essence of the Christian life is the life of separation.

When we were saved we were called out of the world. We are in the world, yet we are not of the world. We are not of the world, yet we are sent unto the world.

Peter at Pentecost cried out, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation". Paul wrote, "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate". John wrote, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him".

"How can two walk together except they be agreed"? The very name that the New Testament gives to the household of God is the word "church", and the word means "called out". In Hebrews we read, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach". In another passage in James we read, "Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God". In Ephesians we find this: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness".

Separation is the contention of the whole Bible. It begins in a suggestive way, where God in Genesis 1:4, "divided the light from the darkness". It is concluded in Revelation 22:15, where, after speak-

ing of those who enter in through the gates into the city, it says, "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie".

When the Bible says, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification", it includes the believer keeping himself unspotted from the world; for sanctification necessitates separation.

Thus James is placing emphasis on a truth that is clearly taught everywhere in Scripture. As we close we say, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful". God's people are a people separated **from** the world, on the one hand, and separated **unto** God on the other.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ROYAL LAW

THE ROYAL LAW

WE are now entering chapter 2 of the Epistle of James. We will find some very trite sayings, indeed. Words that need to be weighed and willingly obeyed.

I. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST OF GLORY.

You will note that the words "the Lord" are in italics, and are supplied by the translators to make smooth reading. However we rather like the reading, "Our Lord Jesus Christ of glory", instead of "Our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of glory". The original is more inclusive, as it gives the Saviour "glory" in three names instead of in one.

God the Father is called the Father of glory; the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Glory, and now Christ is called, the Lord Jesus Christ of glory. Thus, it is all "glory" with the Holy Trinity.

Christ is "glory" in ages past, for He Himself said, "The glory I had with Thee before the world was". Christ was "glory" in His earth life, for we read in John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth". Christ will come again in glory, for Matthew 24:30 says, "They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory". Christ will be "glory" in the New Jerusalem, for, "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof".

James desires to crown the Lord Jesus Christ with His crown of glory. He desires to give to

Christ the glory due His Name; he wants to make Christ the Center of all glory. It is for this cause that we read, the strong and irresistible appeal of the Apostle, "Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory, with respect of persons".

II. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS SUPREME IN GLORY.

James wants us to remember that Christ is the all-glorious One. We who have faith in Him, must not rob Him of His glory, while we seek to glory in men.

The Spirit's admonition in James is the same as His admonition through Paul:

"Let no man glory in men",

"Let no man glory in the flesh",

"Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord".

Saints have glory, but they have a transferred glory. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord".

If, therefore, saints have glory it is because the Spirit of glory and of Christ resteth on them.

James is not rebuking saints for revealing the glory of the Lord; he is rebuking them for glorying in men because of some supposed worth which their supremacy in riches or in honour may give them.

In glorying in men, because of their human possessions or accomplishments, they were getting their minds off of Christ, who alone is glorious.

It is still true—to the extent that man is exalted,

God is debased. The same spirit which would deify man, would humanize God.

III. HOLDING THE RESPECT OF PERSONS.

The Pharisees of old sought the praises of men. They made broad their phylacteries and enlarged the borders of their garments. They loved to sit in the uppermost seats, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. This same spirit, alas, has gripped many a leader since their day.

There seems to be in all of us, by nature, a desire for human praise. And what is more men delight in giving the praise. The worst of all this is that men place wrong values upon certain things. Let us see how James lined it out:

> "For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment:
>
> "And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:
>
> "Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts"?

The standard of excellence among men is, according to these verses:

1. Respect to Him That Hath Gay Clothing. A gold ring, and goodly apparel take the day. The man so attired must be some great one. He must have climbed high above the common herd. He is honorable because he is well groomed. Perhaps his honor has been attained by a collosal dishonor. He may have reached the zenith of affluence through wicked dealings, but he reached it.

2. Disrespect to Him That Wears the Vile Raiment. Vile raiment demonstrates that the man is

poor. He is therefore judged as being worthless and without value. He is set aside, humbled and cast off. There is respect to the rich, and disrespect to the poor. To the rich and rested who can easily afford a seat by his own purchase, the church says, "Sit thou here in a good place". To the poor, and weary, who cannot afford to purchase a seat, the church says, "Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool".

IV. INCORRECT JUDGMENT.

James contends that such discriminations between the rich and the poor, make men "judges of evil thoughts". Why?

1. In Condoning and Applauding the Rich There Is a Danger of Condoning and Applauding Sin. In chapter 5 this subject is dealt with more fully. The rich oppress the poor. They hold back the hire of their laborers. They live in luxury and are wanton, because they have robbed the poor. They lay up for themselves treasures on earth against God's direct command. Then the church gives them favor.

We do not say that all rich men obtained their riches by fraud; we do say that they all keep their riches contrary to God's command. So, be they ever so innocent in obtaining their wealth, they are ever so guilty in hoarding it and holding it.

God has said, "Let him labour that he may have to give". Then how can saints labor that they may have to hoard? "The love of money is the root of all evil". If a rich man is held in esteem, it must not be because he has accumulated riches, but because he has disbursed them. Rich men in this

world, should not be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches. They should "do good, and be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate".

2. In Condoning and Applauding the Rich, Saints Are in Danger of Being Partial in Themselves. We applaud the rich, because we seek what they possess more than what they are. It has always been so. When riches increase, they increase that eat them. As money comes in, friends come in.

None know this more than the rich. They know that the reason they are given front seats and places of honor is because of what they have, and not because of what they are. They know that there is, in all of this, a continual pull at their purse strings.

Many a man has power over the pulpit because he butters the bread that the minister eats. He pays the debts, or at least he is supposed to do so. He always holds the possibility of beneficence, and the church and the preacher live in constant hope that he will sooner or later loosen up a bit. Therefore they give him honor and recognition and prestige.

Take the run of the trustees of any church, the run of their deacons, and officers of every class. The leader in the church societies, whether women or men, is usually the most affluent in the church.

What if a man or woman is worldly; they have money, and they must be recognized.

Who calls the pastor? Who dictates the policy of the business meetings? Who? who? who? Let

anyone answer in truth, and they will say the ones who are financially and socially prominent.

Why is it almost impossible to have discipline in the church of Christ? We all know why. The children of the rich are the leaders in society, and their dads are the deacons, and the trustees, and the high holders of church authority.

The Holy Spirit said it: They who give honor to the rich are partial in themselves. They are feathering their own nests, and trying to provide for their own tables.

V. THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him"?

Surely the Judge of all the earth knows; and He judges righteous judgment. He places the rich in this world and the poor in this world, who are rich in faith, and heirs in the next world before Him, then He chooses the poor.

Did God say to place the rich in places of trust in the church? Read your Bible. Never such a word. Following Pentecost, as the need of special men for special service became apparent, God said, "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business". The spirit of this order has never been changed. Men who have charge of business in the church need to be men who are honest and Spirit-filled. These are the men God chooses.

Did not Paul, in the Spirit, write to Titus that he should ordain elders in every city? Was he to appoint men who were socially and financially

prominent? Hear the command: "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly". He told Titus that a bishop "must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught". These are the men God hath chosen. Titus might have said, "There are no such men in Crete". That being the case, his responsibility ended, and no elders or bishops could be appointed. God has never changed this order.

There is one Scripture that shows God's judgment as between the rich and the poor: it is Luke 16:19-31. The rich man was clothed in purple and fine linen. He fared sumptuously every day. He, nevertheless, shut up his bowels of compassion against Lazarus, the beggar, who sat at his gate full of sores. The rich man died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torment.

There was another man, named Lazarus, poor and sick, and begging: an outcast among men, but pitied by the dogs who licked his sores. The rich man died and was buried. The poor man also died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, where he was comforted.

This was the finality of the judgment of God.

VI. GOD'S REASON FOR A REVERSAL OF MAN'S JUDGMENT.

The Lord stops to show the saints among the twelve tribes scattered abroad, and all other saints, some potent things. He says:

1. Ye Have Despised the Poor. The poor they had despised were the poor who were rich in faith; the poor, who, like Lazarus, were heirs of the Kingdom. Such men should have been honored for their faith and for their future inheritance.

Did Christ practice what James preached? He did. There was in the synagogue many of the rich who out of their abundance cast in much. There was a poor widow, who, out of her penury cast in all her living, two insignificant mites. What said the Lord Jesus? "She has cast in more than they all".

But you say Christ loved a rich young ruler. Certainly He did, He still loves the rich. But remember that Christ demanded of the same rich ruler, whom He loved: "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come, take up thy cross, and follow Me". He also said: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God"?

But, you say, Christ dined with Zacchæus. To be sure, but Zacchæus had first said, "Half of my goods I give to feed the poor". He also promised to restore fourfold to every man whom he had robbed.

James saw that the saints were looking on the outward appearance while God looked at the heart. To the rich in Laodicea, Christ said, "And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be

clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear".

To the poor in Smyrna Christ said, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, **(but thou art rich)**".

2. **Do Not the Rich Oppress You?** The Spirit calls the attention of the saints to this fact: the very ones whom they sought to honor were the ones who were wreaking vengeance upon their heads. He said, "Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy Name by the which ye are called"?

It was doubly strange. The church was neglecting the very men whose faith had been their chief asset; and was honoring the very men whose enmity had been their chief liability. They were casting off the dove and embracing the serpent.

Who has depleted the church of our own times, and shorn it of its power? The worldly rich. Who have the church honored and feted? The worldly rich.

Who has been the backbone, the strength and power of the church? The praying, faithful poor. Who have been set aside, forgotten and ignored? The praying, faithful poor.

VII. THE ROYAL LAW WHICH SHOULD GOVERN ALL JUDGMENT.

Some one reading this message, who is poor and godless, has perhaps said in their hearts, "Go to it preacher, hit 'em hard." "Curse the rich." If this is the attitude of any, it is not the attitude of God. God commands that we must not prefer and honor

the rich because of their gold and their goodly apparel. He however gives no warrant to us to curse the rich.

To all, whether rich or poor, godly or corrupt, there is but one law for the Christian—it is the royal law; that is the law of royal Heaven; it is according to the Scripture: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself".

In doing this we do well. Christ died for rich men as well as for poor men. He, however counts no monetary distinctions between the rich and poor as worthy of note. He knows that the man who is rich to-day, shall be poor to-morrow. "So shall the rich man fade away in his deeds". Death is a great leveler. It recognizes no position, no accumulation of wealth. In the grave all look alike. In Heaven each one "looks" like what he has sent up there, in righteous walk and faith. His money will not affect his standing, save as he spent it for God and laid it up where moth and rust do not corrupt.

If we fulfil the royal law of love to all, we do well; but if we have respect to persons, we commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

This is as far as we can go to-day. In conclusion let us tell a story we have read or heard somewhere, as nearly as we can remember it.

The new minister in a certain church was to preach his first sermon. He was fluent, gifted, good looking, and he had come with splendid recommendations from his college. The church was filled with people to welcome him. As the crowd gathered, a poor woman, neatly clad, but with marks of evident penury pressed her way down the

isle unaccompanied, and took her seat in the third pew.

Shortly two rich women came along and sat in the same pew, for it was theirs by the payment of a big rental. They eyed the poor old lady, and then requested that she leave the pew. She, however, appeared not to understand. They began to make remarks about her poverty and her dress. Such an one they said had no right to mingle with them, and occupy their pew. The dear old soul stayed on, unmoved by their words. Finally one of the women turned and motioned to an usher. He came and was requested to take the old woman back by the door where she belonged.

Soon the old woman was forgotten in the excitement of the entrance of the new minister. The two women in seat three, went into ecstacy. They said, "Isn't he handsome? and to think of it, he is to eat with us at our home to-day."

The preacher came out, walked quietly to the pulpit, stood and gazed this way and that, as though hunting for some one. Then, without ado, he left the pulpit, walked down the aisle, took the old lady by the arm, and led her up to the very pew, from whence she had been driven away. As he passed her in with every mark of love and affection toward her, he said to the women, will you please allow my mother to sit with you in your pew." The women blushed, but agreed. Afterward they said, "We did not know she was the preacher's mother." Well, suppose she had not been the preacher's mother, she was a child of God, and should have been welcomed in Her Father's house.

BE YE NOT RESPECTERS OF PERSONS.

CHAPTER X.

ARE CHRISTIANS UNDER THE LAW?

ARE CHRISTIANS UNDER THE LAW?

THE sermon of to-day hovers around the Law of God, and its violators. James says, *(chapter 2:9)*: "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the Law as transgressors".

The Law was written on two tables of stone, on the one was inscribed four commandments and on the other six. The Lord Jesus placed over the one, this statement: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God". Over the other He inscribed, "And thy neighbour as thyself".

In our preceding sermon we dwelt somewhat at length on the second commandment, which included the six commandments written on the second table of stone. James called this commandment, **"the Royal Law".**

He who showed "respect of persons" broke the Royal Law, which reads, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". Sin is, according to the Bible, "the transgression of the Law". Therefore James says, "If ye have respect of persons ye commit sin, and are convinced of the Law as transgressors".

It is useless to plead conformity to many parts of the Law, for James says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" *(vs. 10)*.

James continues, "For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the Law".

We are thrown face to face against an age-worn query.

I. ARE SAINTS UNDER THE LAW FOR SALVATION?

In the realm where **Grace** moves, saints are not under Law. In the realm of walk and service saints are under Law to Christ.

We may state it differently. Saints are not under Law so far as their salvation from sin and eternal life are concerned, they are under Law to Christ so far as rewards are concerned.

It is proper and right to sing,

> "Free from the Law, O happy condition,
> Jesus has died and there is remission."

If we are under Law for salvation, then we are under works, Law-works. If we are under works, then we are not under grace. If we are saved by our own worth, in part or in whole, then we are under Law, in part or in whole.

If we are under works, and therefore under Law, then Christ died in vain.

If we are under both Grace and Law-works, then, we have two Saviours.

If we are under Law-works to any extent, then just to that extent the Calvary-work of the Lord Jesus is insufficient.

How horrid for anyone to imagine that he must add anything to what Christ wrought out upon the Cross. He who would add to Christ's Calvary work down here, would detract from His praise over there in Glory.

The truth is this—the sinner or the saint can do nothing to save themselves; they are not under

Law for righteousness. We are saved by Grace through faith, and that not of ourselves it is the gift of God.

Luther was unwilling to grant to the Diet at Worms that "Salvation was by Grace, plus; he insisted that "Salvation was by Grace, alone." He said, "Here I stand, God help me; I can do nothing else." We stand where Luther stood. That is where the Bible stands. "If of Grace then it is no more of works; otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more of Grace: otherwise works is no more work".

If we are saved by works, we will have whereof to glory. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of Grace, but of debt". It is for this very reason that salvation is by faith; and not by works, for "It is of faith, that it might be by Grace".

If we are saved by Grace, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith **without the deeds of the Law".**

If there is a man anywhere who asserts that we are justified by the Law he is "fallen from Grace". He is entangling himself again with the yoke of bondage. "That no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God it is evident, for the just shall live by faith. And the Law is not by faith".

What is the voice of the Law? It is this: "The man that doeth them, shall live in them". It is not the hearer of the Law who is justified but the doer. James makes this plain: "Whosoever shall keep the

whole Law, and yet offend in **one point,** he is guilty of all".

What is our conclusion? It is this: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ".

What is the conclusion of it all? It is this: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree".

God pity the man who insists that he is under Law-works. He is voluntarily placing himself under the **curse.** He is seeking to dwell under the thunderings of Sinai, "The mount that might not be touched, and that burned with fire". The Law came from Sinai, and he who is under the Law is under the blackness, and the darkness, and the tempest, that shrouded the mount when the Law was given. He is placing himself upon that mount which, if so much as a beast touched it was commanded to be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.

THANK GOD WE ARE NOT UNDER LAW OR LAW-WORKS FOR JUSTIFICATION

Now we are ready to study the Christian's relation to the Law of Christ, and we state our second query?

II. ARE SAINTS UNDER LAW TO CHRIST FOR REWARDS?

That we, in the days of our sinnerhood, were not under Law for justification, we have plainly proved. Saints, are not under Law for salvation for the added reason, that they are already **saved.** Thank God, we have passed from death unto life!

Thank God, we now have eternal life! We are saved and not in any process of salvation. We are sons, for John has said, "Beloved, **now** are we the sons of God".

However, there is a solemn question before us that comes to us, not as sinners seeking justification, but as saints seeking the approval of our Lord, and the rewards that He shall bring with Him at His Coming.

We have stated strongly that sinners can do nothing to **become** Christians; they must accept by faith the finished Calvary work of Christ. We now wish to state just as strongly that saints must do everything that **becomes** Christians; they must remember that they are under Law to Christ, under penalty of punishment for disobedience, and under promise of rewards for obedience.

James is as strong as Paul or as anyone else on justification by Grace; but the Holy Spirit in James is calling us into the consideration of the Christian's relationship to holy living, and to holy service.

James says, "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the Law of Liberty". Saints are not under the Law of Sinai with its lightnings and thunders and darkness, and with a flesh that cannot keep the Law. Saints are under the **Law of Liberty.** What is the Law of Liberty? It is the old Law written on two tables of stone, reiterated under two great outstanding statements, without any retractions whatsoever, but with striking additional meanings.

Cease your horror. Wait until we are through. Christ said, "It hath been said, * * but I say unto

you". Did Christ in any instance *(Matt. 5)* subtract from Moses' word? Nay, He rather enlarged upon it.

But you say, Christ came to do away with the Law of Moses. Is that so? Then why did He say: "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets? I am not come to destroy but to fulfil"?

But you say, Christ came to fulfil the Law and the Prophets that He might do away with them for us. Is that so? Then why did Christ continue to say: "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be **fulfilled**".

But you say, Paul says that saints are not under the Law. Is that so? Then why did Paul say,

> "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.
>
> "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet: and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
>
> "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law" *(Rom. 13:8-10)*.

Paul said that **love** was the fulfilling of the Law, not the undoing of the Law, and not the setting aside of the Law.

Beloved, it is time for some saints to call a halt. We have preached that saints are not under the Law, until some men are beginning to imagine that they can live as they list without fear of punishment from God.

The pulpit and the pew must differentiate between being under the Law for justification, and being under the Law for approval.

The Christian can **do** nothing to be saved, but he should **do** everything after he is saved that becomes the **saved.**

WHAT IS THE LAW OF LIBERTY?

Men under Law, for justification, were under a yoke of bondage that spelled failure. Why? Because the flesh was weak and could not keep the Law. The Law therefore became a schoolmaster to drive us to Christ. The sinner who sought to be saved by the keeping of the Law, was hopelessly lost, because "all have sinned". There is not a just man on the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.

The Christian is under Law; but not under Law as a legalist driven by a whip. He is under Law, in liberty; he is under Law, in love. What does this mean? We believe it means that a Christian under **love** fulfils the Law in liberty. It means that what "the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit".**

"The Law of Liberty", is the Law fulfilled by saints without the flesh hindering its fulfilment.

The sinner cannot be under Law for justification, because the flesh is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. Had God placed sinful man under the Law for justification, He had never seen one sinner saved, because the "carnal mind is enmity against God; **it is not subject to the**

Law of God, neither indeed can be". "So then they that ar in the flesh cannot please God".

However, saints are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. We are not under a yoke of bondage, but under the Law of Liberty. We, in the Spirit, are assured a full and a complete fulfilment of the Law.

Paul asked the pointed question—"Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may abound"? He answered his own question thus—"God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein"?

What is sin? Whatsoever else sin may be, it is **the transgression of the Law.** Shall saints then cast off the Law as excess baggage? Shall they repudiate its demands as useless? Shall they take their fling, and live as they list? For very shame! We are under Law to Christ, and the being under Law to Christ, lifts us into the highest possible realm of holy living toward God and toward man. The spirit of the Ten Commandments was summed up in two things—**Love** to God, and **Love** to our neighbor. Therefore **love** fulfils the Law.

Have we considered this fact? Under the Law of Love, the Law to Christ, the Law of Liberty, all of the Ten Commandments, with the exception only of the fourth, are reiterated in the Epistles of the New Testament.

IS JAMES ALONE IN PLACING THE CHRISTIAN UNDER THE LAW OF LIBERTY?

We become wearied with the folly of those who are forever saying that James taught salvation by

works. He did not; he could not. In our next sermon we will go into this more fully. We are just as wearied with the oft-stated fling that Paul never placed Christians under the Law in any sense at all.

For a while we must turn from James and his demands for obedience to the Law of Liberty, that we may see what the Holy Ghost through Paul proclaims in the Book of Romans.

We are seeking to answer this query: Are saints under Law in the sense that they are to walk clean and live holy lives, and to fulfil every demand of God for righteousness, toward God and toward man?

If some one says—certainly the Christian is to live righteously and Godly, but he is not under Law to do so. Then we ask, if the demands of the Holy Spirit throughout the Epistles, as he inculcates righteous living, are not laws? If not, then what is Law? Define Law for us? What do you mean by **Law?** If you answer, the Ten Commandments, then we ask what demand, or command of the Spirit in the Epistles is not easily classed under one of the ten great Laws of God written on the two tables of stone, so far as the New Testament standard of right living is concerned?

It is puerile, it is sinful to say that the Christian is not under Law to Christ, and that they are left under love to do as they please. We assert that the Christian is under as definite demands of conduct in this age, as were saints of any age. We answer that **love fulfils** the law of conduct toward God and man, and in no way **annuls** it.

Let us now examine some of the statements of

the Holy Spirit in Romans, and see whether we are any less under Law as to conduct, than were the saints of old.

THE VOICE OF GOD IN ROMANS

After Paul has conclusively shown that the sinner is not under Law for justification, he takes up the question before us. He asks if the Christian, under Grace, shall continue in sin? What does he reply? Even this:

> "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; * * for sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace".

Then lest some one should wish to use their liberty in Grace as an excuse for sin, Paul once again asks, "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under Grace? God forbid".

We have quoted from Romans 6. Paul goes on to urge that saints are "made free from sin", and that they have been made "servants of righteousness".

In chapter 7 of Romans, after the Spirit shows the terror that the Law played as it held its sway over sinful souls, and the joy that marriage to Christ conferred, then he says:

> "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.
>
> "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.
>
> "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter" *(Rom. 7:4-6).*

Once we were alive to the Law. The Law stood over us and flourished its whip, while we cringed in fear before its power. Now, in Christ we are dead to the Law. It presents no terror to us, the crack of its whip causes no fear, we smile at its fury. Why? Because of old "when we were in the flesh, the motion of sins, which were by the Law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death". Then we were justly filled with fear.

Now that we are dead to the Law and not dead in it; we have no fear, for we are delivered from the Law, from its tyranny and its power. Do we obey the Law? Yes, but we obey it "in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter".

We do not serve the Law as a slave helplessly squirming under its terrible threats of "Thou shalt not"; but we serve it as a victor in a living Christ, led on in the train of His triumph.

Once we tried to keep the Law and utterly failed. Now we do not try, but trust, and we gloriously succeed. Once we failed and the Law slew us. Now we triumph and we have slain the Law. We are dead to it, not in the sense that we ruthlessly break it, but in the sense that we gloriously fulfil it, and in its fulfilment, we pull its fangs, and make it helpless to harm us.

Some one asks, Do we fulfil it in an imputed sense? in the work of the Christ of the Cross? No, we fulfil it in a personal sense in the Christ of the empty tomb. It is fulfilled in us by the living Christ, through His Spirit putting His resurrection power within us.

When we became saints, we delighted in the Law of God after our inward man; yet we still

realized that the law of sin was working in our members; trying to stand over us with its old whip and bring us once more into captivity. Then we cried, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death"? What joy was ours as our new position in Christ, and the Law's helplessness to enslave us again, came over us. We saw in Christ our victory, and we cried one long loud and exultant cry:

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"

How glorious is our new position. We are now without condemnation. The Law presents no terrors for us. We are fulfilling its demands, not in the flesh, that is, not in the old man which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts, but in the new man, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The Law with all of its Sinaitic lightnings and thunders never bothers us so far as justification is concerned because Christ on the Cross met it openly and vanquished it; nor does it worry us so far as any present claims upon us in our daily walk, are concerned, because the Christ of the Father's right hand, through the poured-forth Spirit, makes us always more than conquerors, as we **walk in the Spirit.** Thank God, we are not under the Law, because we are daily fulfilling its requirements, in the Spirit!

We are sorry that our time is more than past. We will continue in our next address where we lay down the theme for to-day.

CHAPTER XI.

FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

James 2:14-26.

THE Holy Spirit is still following on the same line which we considered in our last message. We are coming now to that part of the Book of James which is least understood, so I think we had better read over the verses in full, and read them carefully:

"What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

"And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

"Even so faith; if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

"Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

"Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also".

There are some statements in this reading to which we call your special attention:

Mark the words in verse 14, "Though a man say".
in verse 16, "And one of you say."
in verse 18, "Yea, a man may say".

Now mark the words in verse 20, "Wilt thou know, O vain man"?
in verse 22, "Seest thou how"?
in verse 24, "Ye see then how".

Observe the following questions?

Verse 14, "Can faith save him"?
Verse 16, "What doth it profit"?
Verse 20, "That faith without works is dead"?
Verse 21, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works"?
Verse 25, "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works"?

The first three statements gather up the assertions of men who base their justification before God on the vain boastings of the flesh. They are the ones who build their hopes on a proud profession, but who know nothing of an actual possession.

The second three statements present an appeal to man's own reasoning powers, and sense of deduction—how a man may see and recognize genuine faith.

The five questions in the third group, are test questions given to lead up to the conclusion of the argument as expressed in the last verse, verse 26, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also".

We are now ready to go carefully into the whole matter.

Inasmuch as there is a consecutive line of argument, beginning with first question of verse 14, and

ending with the statement of verse 26, we will take up the Scripture verse by verse, and seek to follow the Spirit's own teaching, arranged, as He gave it.

I. THE BOAST OF A PROUD BUT DECEIVED HEART.

Statements of the lips can never change conditions of the heart. Here is one who claims to be religious. He says, "I have faith". Does a mere affirmation of faith establish the fact of faith? Is there any profit in claiming something that one does not possess?

This is no slight matter. The churches to-day are filled with men and women who say they have faith in Christ, but who never manifest the slightest proof of such a faith. People are carried into church membership without any evidence that their faith is genuine.

Two things need to be done in the Christian church. First, we need to make plain what faith is, in itself; secondly, we need to make plain how faith can be detected and shown to be real.

(a) WHAT FAITH IS IN ITSELF. While James speaks of what faith is as seen by its fruitage, yet we will tarry just a moment to consider the **faith** of which the Apostle speaks.

Faith is not mere assent to a fact. We ask a man if he believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? He answers affirmatively, because he has never believed anything else. He is orthodox, never fear. He may be a villain, but he has never doubted the historicity of Jesus Christ, nor has he scorned the fact of His Deity. He even believes that Christ died for sinners, and he knows he is one of them.

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It must be left to the elite, the moral modernists, to disc ant the Bible decree that Jesus Christ is the very Saviour of men and the very Son of God.

We asked a man one day if he was a Christian, and with evident irritation he replied, "Of course I am, do you think I am a heathen?" Pressed a bit further we discovered that his claim to faith was based upon the fact that he lived in what he called a "Christian country", and had been raised a Christian, in a Christian home. He knew nothing of an experimental faith.

James in his 19th verse of this chapter describes this man exactly, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble". This is sarcasm with a vengeance. The Spirit says that even the demons go this head believer one better. He believes there is one God, so do they. However, he believes and fears not; they believe and tremble.

Faith must include intellectual assent, but it goes far beyond that. The old theologians used to put it this way. Faith is first of all "assent". That is, faith is the assent of the brain to the facts of God and of Christ and of sin and of the atonement. Then they said: Faith is, secondly, "affiance". Faith says, "I believe", therefore it follows on. It takes a stand in life, and in deed, one to which it assents in reason.

The Holy Spirit in Romans puts it this way:

> "For **with the heart** man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation".

Faith goes deeper than the mere assent of the mind, it includes the affiance of the heart.

We like the Old Testament word of **trust.** Faith

is trust. Common practice may isolate the words "believe" and "faith" to the mere mental, credal acceptance, or affirmation; but the word "trust" cannot be so bandied about. Trust draws faith down into a practical heart relationship toward the one in whom we believe.

(b) WHAT FAITH IS IN ITS FRUITAGE. We must defer the full discussion of this phase of faith to the progress of our discourse, because it is the whole subject matter of to-day's Scriptural consideration.

Just now James is asking, "What doth it profit a man to say that he has faith when in reality he hasn't any?"

Does it remove the pain, for a man to take the foolish attitude toward pain and say, "I have no pain"? Does it give a man faith, to say "I have faith?" Does he therefore have it?

For our part we stand with God and James and with Paul and Peter, and we preach that faith is a blessed living reality that moves and acts, and does things. We regret any modern theology that accepts a faith that merely affirms things.

Is there a single bit of profit, in a man saying, "I have faith", when he has no works, no resultant deeds, which faith invariably produces? Can faith save him, when he has no faith? Can a mere statement of profession save a man who has only a lip parade of faith but no heart and life manifestation of faith?

II. THE ILLUSTRATION OF A FALSE FAITH.

Lest some might stumble and fail to grasp the

meaning of the message of the Spirit, an illustration that cannot be misunderstood is given: James says,

> "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,
> "And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit"?

There is a great deal of lip sympathy that gets nowhere. There is much of "flower sending" that falls too short.

This familiar illustration may enforce the thought before us. A good man was not only sick, but his absence from work had depleted his pocketbook and he was consequently, in dire need of the very necessities of life. He lacked fuel to replenish his winter fires, and he lacked food to invigorate his half-starved body. The church heard of his distress and the deacons went down to pray for him. As they were cloistered with the sick man in prayer, suddenly the door opened and as the icy breath of the day, with its blustering snow swept in the doorway, a youthful voice chimed out, "My father could not come, but he has sent his prayers and they are out in the wagon." The prayer-meeting was abandoned while the good deacons went out and brought in flour and food in abundance; then the youth drove to the coal bin and put in a good supply.

It is all right to pray for the impoverished, but the prayer of faith will at once put into action the commands of the Spirit.

Saying, "be ye warmed" is useless, unless words are followed by action. We will need a bit of this

when we get over to the study of James, chapter 5, where he asserts that the prayer of faith shall save the sick. The prayer of faith is a faith that moves out, gets up, goes on. That is the prayer of faith by the sick. The prayer of faith for the sick is the prayer which provides, succors, strengthens, encourages, and in every possible way assists.

Here is one with a broken leg, shall we say, "Be ye healed" and not set the leg? Here is one who is hungry, shall we say, "Be ye fed", and yet bring no food? Here is one who is cold, shall we say, "Be ye warmed", and build no fire?

What James is emphasizing is that faith is not a cold, dead, lifeless thing; but a hot, living, invigorating principle of action.

James sums up his meaning in these words: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" *(vs. 17)*.

WHAT GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER—PUT NOT ASUNDER

God has put faith and works together. They are indissolubly linked. They cannot be divorced. The moment faith stands alone, it is no longer faith; it is dead.

Thirty-two years ago a beautiful young lassie, told me she would accept my love and love me in return. She said she believed in me. She sealed her faith by standing up with me at the marriage altar. When the minister said, "Do you take this man, whom you now hold by the right hand, to be your true and lawful husband"? she quietly but sincerely answered, "Yes." She was willing to forsake all others. Her faith in me caused her to

swear that she would go with me in sickness and in health, in adversity and in prosperity. During the run of thirty-two years she showed her faith by her works. It took all of those years to work out the deeper meaning of the faith she said was hers, when first we sealed our love. She is now with the Lord, but I have her memory in my heart. I can never forget her first deep love and faith; neither can I ever forget the years which marked out the proof of that first tryst.

Where is he who boldly says, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ"? Will he stand at the marriage altar, and place his hand in the hand of his Lord? Will he go forth with Him, sharing His all in all? Yes.

I was asked by one, if I thought baptism saved the soul from death and hell. I quickly answered, **No!** But said I, "I think that one who is saved by **faith** will surely obey his Lord." He will come out of the world and follow on to know the Lord. He will cast his lot with the people of God and obey Him in the ordinances of His church.

The lame, the blind, the halt, the maimed, believed God, and in each case they acted, they stepped forth on their faith and were healed.

However, Christ did not say "your works have saved thee"—He never said it. He did say "thy faith hath saved thee". However their saving faith was always a living acting faith. Faith put in action saved; not faith without action.

WORKS SHOW THE GENUINENESS OF FAITH

How plainly does the Spirit put it: "Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew

me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works".

How do we know that a tree is alive?—we look for its buds, and leaves, and fruit.

How do we know that the new-born babe is living, and hale and hearty? We know it by its cry, and by its ceaseless moving.

Faith is a living thing. It moves, it acts. Faith is the heart that receives, the hand that takes, the foot that steps, the eye that looks.

The Lord taught this just as James taught it. Christ said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life". What did the snake-bitten Israelites do? Did they say, "I believe in the efficacy of the uplifted serpent"? Not at all. They did not need to say it, **they looked at it, and were healed.**

They could have said, "I believe", all the day long, but it would not have healed them. They had to **look.** Their **look** demonstrated their faith.

We fail to grasp the sincerity of the man who says, "I have faith", when he has not works. At Pentecost, "They that gladly received the Word, were baptized". "And, they **continued** in the Apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers".

The jailor of Philippi was told by Paul, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved". What was the result, "He took them (Paul and Silas) the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And when he had brought them into his

house he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house". Genuine faith always works.

Where can you find the message of James more strongly illustrated than in Paul's Ephesian converts? Hear the words of Acts 19: "And many that believed, came and confessed, and **shewed their deeds.** Many of them also which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed".

The Thessalonians believed Paul's testimony, and received the Lord Jesus Christ. What was the result? Here is what Paul said—"How ye turned to God from idols to **serve** the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven".

The position of James is the position of the whole Bible. Here it is—"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead"? That is: there is no faith without works.

FAITH AND HEAD ASSENT DIFFERENTIATED

A sinner may be able to repeat the Apostles' Creed in full; he may be able to give a dissertation on the great fact of grace and of the substitutionary work of Christ; he may have memorized a large part of the Bible and yet have no saving faith.

Faith is more, far more than knowing the truth. Faith makes the truth real. It is truth in the heart, and not faith in the head that saves. The demons believed that there is one God. However the demons trembled and quailed before Him, be-

cause they knew that their judgment was sure, and their lost estate was final.

Multitudes of men and of women have gone to hell who believed intellectually that there was a God, and a Christ, and a Cross, and a Salvation, but they never trusted in that God, and Christ, and Cross, and in the Saviour. They did not believe in their hearts the Lord Jesus, neither did they confess Him with their mouths. They refused to come under His sway and accept His leadership.

GOD'S AND MAN'S VIEWPOINT

God said through Paul, "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory". Then he added, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt".

God said through James, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar"?

There is not a shadow of difference in these statements. Why not? Let me suggest some reasons.

(a) PAUL IS DISCUSSING WORKS WHOLLY ON THE BASIS OF LAW-WORKS, BUT NOT THE WORKS WHICH FOLLOW FAITH. Paul is talking about works which are apart from faith, and which precede it. Had Abraham offered up his son, as a religious fanaticism, apart from the obedience of faith; his act had been utterly abhorent unto God. Naught that a man can do by keeping the Law, or by Law-works can save him. If salvation was by the works of the Law, salvation would be of debt, and not of grace at all.

(b) JAMES IS TALKING ABOUT THE WORKS WHICH

FOLLOW FAITH. The natural results of faith. They are not Law-works, but the obedience of a spiritual life. Had Abraham said he believed God and then refused to obey God, no one would have acknowledged his faith.

Works which **precede** faith are not acceptable because they are not perfect before God. No man stands guiltless before God on the ground of Law-works. If salvation is by the works of the Law, then it must be by the Law fulfilled to the completion, for, whosoever keepeth the whole Law and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all.

God did not need to await Abraham's going out into a land of which he knew not, before he recognized his faith; God did not need to see Abraham on the way to Mount Moriah, or to see him lifting up the shining blade to slay his son before He knew of Abraham's faith: but we needed to see it. For this cause James says, in verse 22, **"Seest thou** how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect". Again in verse 24, **"Ye see then how** that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only".

Of course we see faith, not in the affirmation of the lips, but in the actions of the life. Did not Christ Himself say, "By their fruits **ye** shall **know** them"? That is what James said.

The works of the unregenerate mind, Law works, or church work, or any work is not acceptable to God. Why not? Because the flesh is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Rahab the harlot was justified by works, when

she received the messengers and sent them on their way, because her works were the result of her faith, and not a fore-runner of her faith. She did not hide the messengers of God to be saved, she hid them because she believed. The scarlet cord which faith let down succored her. Her protection of God's messengers was the proof of her faith.

Paul in Spirit writing of Rahab said, "By faith the harlot Rahab, perished not with them that believed not; **when she had received the spies in peace".**

James in the same Spirit wrote, "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers"? The words are much alike. The difference is that James emphasizes the works, and Paul the faith. However Paul added, **"When** she had received the spies in peace". And James added, "When she had received the messengers". Then James gave his reason—**"for as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also".**

What then is our conclusion? It is this: Both Paul and James teach the same thing—a **living, vital faith,** and not a **dead, formal profession of faith.**

Paul is looking at faith apart from works, but followed by works. James is looking at works, but works preceded by faith.

Paul by the Holy Ghost puts it this way: "For by grace are ye saved through faith: * * **not of works,** lest any man should boast: **for we are His workmanship** created in Christ Jesus **unto good works,** which God hath afore ordained that we **should walk in them".**

James says no less than this, and no more. He merely urges that saints who fail to **walk in the good works which** God hath ordained, are not saints and they have no faith.

CHAPTER XII.

"THE TONGUE CAN NO MAN TAME"

Part I

"THE TONGUE CAN NO MAN TAME"

THE Spirit of God in many cases gives one particular portion of Scripture to the discussion of some great theme. Many things will be said in many parts, but the consummation of what is said is placed in some selected portion of the Word of God.

There are many things which God has to say about the tongue, beginning with Genesis and running through Revelation. However, the chapter which is before us to-day, James 3, gives God's final summing up of the teaching of the Word of God concerning the tongue.

The Apostle Paul said on one occasion, "I will not be brought under the power of any". He was unwilling to serve men and he was unwilling to serve the dictates of his own flesh. He would not be brought under the power of any one or anything. Many of us might boast that we were not a bond-slave to this, or to that, but the majority must confess that they have sinned in this one thing—in the domination of their tongue.

A Sad Condition Confessed:—

In verse 2, we read, "For in many things, we offend all". There is no doubt that this statement is true. All of us offend in many things. Whatever we are going to say about the message of the Holy Spirit through James, we cannot claim that he taught absolute perfection in works. Quite to the contrary, he said, That **all of us** offend in many things.

The Lord told His disciples, "All ye shall be of-

fended because of Me this night". Peter said, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I". His boast, however, had a very sad climax for he offended worse than they. He went so far as to curse and to swear and to say, "I know not the Man".

You can run through the Word of God and pick out the holiest of men, but you will find none of them who made any claim to sinless perfection.

Job had been very boastful. The 29th chapter of the Book that bears his name is one string of claims to virtue. However, when Job saw the Lord and heard Him speak, he said, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes".

The one outstanding character of the Old Testament, against whom there is nothing at all recorded by the Divine Writer, is Daniel. Yet, we read that Daniel set his face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes, and he prayed unto the Lord and made his confession saying, "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments".

The Apostle Paul stands before us as a man of unimpeachable character. Even in the days before his salvation, he said he was blameless, so far as the keeping of the Law was concerned. Yet, Paul the Apostle, saved, Spirit-filled, and Scripturally sanctified, said, "I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord".

The Apostle Paul also said, "I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) there dwelleth no good thing". While he was not living in any known sin, yet he realized that the Lord saw within him that which was evil.

Thus, we contend that the Spirit of God in James told the truth, "In many things we offend all". In this, neither James nor we are making any excuses for men to keep on sinning. We certainly teach quite to the contrary. However, where is he who dares to boast his own goodness.

The Supreme Test:—

The Holy Spirit has given us in verse 2, the supreme test of a perfect man. He says, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body".

Perhaps, if we had let down the gauntlet concerning man's sins, we would not have thought of the tongue as the member capable of the greatest sinning, nor as the member hardest to bring under control. Yet, so it is.

When the tongue is bridled, then, the whole body can be bridled. We would remind our hearers that Israel's chief sin lay in their tongue. They had compassed the whole land with their blasphemies against God.

When Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up and His glory filled the Temple, he cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips". His sin and the sin of Israel was the sin of their lips.

Saul of Tarsus, while conceding himself as we

have just remarked, blameless, in his keeping of the Law, yet acknowledged that he was a blasphemer, and that he spoke continuously against the Lord.

In fact, when Ananias was fearful to go down, upon God's command, to baptize Saul, the Lord said unto Ananias, "Behold, he prayeth". The man who once was a blasphemer, had learned to pray.

A Little Member Which Boasteth Great Things:—

We read concerning the tongue these words, "Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth".

We also read "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth".

The tongue is likened in these verses, first, to the bits in the horses' mouths. Insignificant these "bits", may appear, and small though they may be, yet they turn about the whole body of the great, fiery steed.

The tongue is likened, secondly, to the helm, or, the rudder of some great ocean liner which is turned in its course by so simple a device.

It is again likened unto the great matter which a little fire may kindle.

We would that men might realize the possibilities of the little member known as the tongue for either good or evil. The Book of Jude is telling of

men during the last days who will deny the only Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ. In this Book the Spirit emphasizes the fact of their sinning with their tongues.

In verse 10, they are set forth as, **speaking** "evil of those things which they know not".

In verse 11, they are perishing "in the **gainsaying** of Core".

In verse 15, they are charged for their **hard speeches,** which they have **spoken** against Christ.

In verse 16, they are described as "**murmurers, complainers**". In the same verse, they are pictured as speaking "**great swelling** words".

In verse 18, they are spoken of as "**mockers**" who will arise in the last time.

How truly are these words being fulfilled! Some men seem to have no sense of Satanic power. They mock Satan and they ridicule him. They rail upon him with their tongue. These same men, like Core, with their tongues, never lack words to belittle the promises and prophecies of the Word of God.

The Deity of Jesus Christ is maligned, His holy life, as God the Son, and Son of God, is set at naught, and those who proclaim these Bible truths are spoken of as little men,—the untutored and the untaught, who hold a theology that is antiquated, and should be relegated.

To us, the darkest picture of the tongue that we have in this little Book of Jude is that where it tells of their hard speeches spoken against **Christ.**

On the other hand, we have the antithesis of this. They speak great swelling words, holding **men's persons** in admiration, because of advantage.

With their tongues, they debase Deity, and humanize Christ. Then, on the other hand, they immediately magnify the glory of man and deify him.

With their tongues, they mock. Peter tells us that their mocking has particularly to do with the promise which the Lord Jesus gave to His disciples that He would come again.

God pity men who with their little member, the tongue, boast great things. The judgment of God is ever upon such.

When King Herod on his birthday was giving an oration and the populace gave a shout, saying, "It is the voice of a god and not of a man" immediately the angel of the Lord smote him because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost.

When Nebuchadnezzar looked out upon mighty Babylon and boasted with his tongue, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty"? Then, while the word was yet in the king's mouth, a voice from Heaven spoke saying, "The kingdom is departed from thee".

The Defiling Power of the Tongue:—

James, in verse 6, tells us, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell".

Language could scarcely be stronger than this, the tongue is described as a fire, set ablaze from the pit of the abyss.

We remember as a lad, at college, we recited a poem, known as "The First Settler's Story". This poem very strikingly describes the wreckage wrought by a human tongue. The First Settler had come to the frontier and staked him out a tract of land. He is made to say:—

"Well, neighborhoods meant counties in those days,
And the roads didn't have accommodating ways."

After this, Will Carlton goes on to describe the little, one-horse meeting as he called it, which the First Settler and his young bride had. He says:—

"Sunday, we didn't propose, for lack o' church,
To have our souls left wholly in the lurch,
And so, I shaved, and dressed up, well's I could,
And did a day's work, trying to be good."

They did sing their sacred lines and go through a kind of religious service. Far out on the frontier, there were many tasks in which the settler's youthful wife did full share. He said:—

"When I was logging, burning, chopping wood,
She'd always linger round, and help me, best she could,
And kept me fresh, ambitious all the while,
And lifted tons, just with her voice and smile."

Finally, the first settler is described as coming home one night and finding that the cows had strayed away. He is supposed to have said:—

"One night, when I came home unusual late,
Too hungry and too tired to feel first rate,
Her supper struck me wrong; though I'll allow
She hadn't much to strike with, anyhow;
And, when I went to milk the cows, and found
They had wandered from their usual feeding ground,
And probably left a few long miles behind 'em,
Which I must copy if I meant to find 'em:
Flash! Quick! The stay chains of my temper broke,
And in a rage, these hot words, I'd spoke;
'You'd ought to have kept the animals in view,
And "drove" them in, you've nothing else to do.

The heft of all our life on me must fall,
You just stand round, and let me do it all.'
Those words, they hadn't been gone a half minute,
Before I saw the cold dead poison in it.
And I'd have given all I had and more,
To've only safely got them back, indoor.

"She handed back no words as I could hear
She didn't frown, she didn't shed a tear.
Half proud, half crushed, she stood and looked me o'er,
Like some one she had never seen before."

The poet goes on to describe how

"That night, while theoretically sleeping,
I half heard, and half felt, that she was weeping;
And my heart then projected this design,
To softly draw her face up unto mine,
And ask of her forgiveness to bestow,
For doing what we both knew wasn't so.
But, somehow, every time I'd try,
Pride would appear, and kind'a catch my eye."

The poet goes on to describe how the next morning after breakfast was over, and the sweet little wife had put on a few little breakfast airs, the first settler started away for his day's work.

"Next morning, when, stone-faced, but heavy hearted,
With dinner pail and sharpened axe, I started
Away for my day's work, she watched the door,
And followed me, half way to it, or more:
And, I was just a'turning round at this, and asking for my
usual good-by kiss,
When on her lip, I saw a proudish curl,
And in her eye a shadow of reserve, * *
And so the usual parting didn't occur,
Although her lips invited me to her."

As the day's work wore along, the first settler decided, because of a brewing storm to hurry home. He said:—

"I went home over early on that eve,
Having contrived to make myself believe
By various signs, I kind'a knew, or guessed,
A thunder storm was coming from the west.
Half out of breath, the cabin door I swung,

With tender heart words streaming on my tongue,
But all within was cold and bare,
My house had lost its soul, she was not there.
A penciled note was on the table spread;
And these are something like the words it said:
'The cows have strayed away, again, I fear,
I watched them pretty close, don't scold me dear;
Dear, if a burden I have been to you,
And haven't loved you, as I used to do,
Let old time memories, my forgiveness plead,
I've tried to do my best, I have, indeed.
Darling, piece out with love, the strength I lack,
And have kind words for me when I get back!

"Scarce did I give this letter sight and tongue,
Some swift blown raindrops to the window clung,
And from the clouds, a deep, rough growl proceeded,
My thunderstorm had come and it wasn't needed.
My dog, who skirmished round me all the day,
Now crouched and whimpering in a corner lay.
I dragged him by the collar to the wall,
I pressed his quivering muzzle to a shawl;
Track her, old boy, I shouted, and he whined,
Matched eyes with me, as if to read my mind;
Then, with a yell, went racing through the wood.
I followed him as faithful as I could.
No pleasure trip was that, through wind and rain,
We raced with death, we hunted noble game.
Three times again my cabin door I found,
Half hoping she might be there, safe and sound,
But each time t'was an unavailing care,
My house had lost its soul, she was not there."

The poet finally gives the picture of the man discouraged and downcast, returning to his home.

"When climbing the wet trees, next morning's sun,
Laughed at the ruin that the night had done,
Half out of breath, with sigh and sorrow bent,
Back to what used to be my home, I went.
But, as I neared the little clearing ground,
Listen! I hear the cowbells tinkling sound,
The cabin door was just a bit ajar,
It beamed upon my glad eyes like a star:
You've come, I shouted, and rushed through the door.
Yes! she had come, and gone again.
She lay, with all her young life drenched away,
Lay, the heart ruins of my home, among,

Not far from where I'd killed her, with my tongue.
A I now my story's done, its almost o'er,
Part of it never breathed the air before.
And wheresoe'er the story's voice may reach,
This is the moral I would have it teach:—
Boys flying kites, haul in their white-winged birds,
You can't do that, when you are flying words:
Thoughts unexpressed, may sometimes fall back dead,
But God Himself can't kill them when they're said."

This poem was rather long to give you to-night, and yet I gave it because it shows so realistically how the tongue is set on fire of hell. It describes the havoc caused by a few hasty words.

The Tongue Likened unto Beasts and Birds and Serpents:—

Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of the things in the sea, is tamed; and hath been tamed of mankind, but the tongue can no man tame.

The tongue is not only likened unto these beasts and birds and serpents, but it is proclaimed as being more deadly than they. They may be tamed by man. Man cannot tame the tongue. The tongue is an **unruly** evil. It is full of **deadly poison.**

Men may talk of turning over a new leaf and of living a better life by their own power of will, but they stand absolutely helpless before the sway of their tongue.

The drunkard **may** give up his drink, the gambler **may** leave his cards, the impure **may** turn from his lust, but no man can turn from the domination of an evil tongue.

The lion, the tiger and the jaguar of the forest are no more fierce than the tongue. The eagle, the vulture and the buzzard are no more unclean than

the tongue. The serpent, the adder and scorpion, are no more deadly than the tongue.

If a man would get victory over this deadly evil, there is only One who giveth victory. Man cannot tame the tongue, **God can.**

CHAPTER XIII.

"THE TONGUE CAN NO MAN TAME"

Part 2

"THE TONGUE CAN NO MAN TAME"

AS we give this second sermon upon the 3rd chapter of James, we wish to emphasize particularly verses 8, 9 and 10. These read as follows:—

> "But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.
> "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.
> "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be".

We have before us a very serious and solemn consideration. In fact, James himself gives this earnest admonition, "My brethren, these things ought not so to be".

What are the things which the Spirit lays so heavily upon him, which ought not to be? It is this:

Here is a man who praises God with his tongue, and then turns around and with the same tongue he curses man, who is made after God's similitude. From the tongue that pronounces the blessing, proceeds the cursing. This is not true in God's natural creation. The same fountain never sends forth sweet water, and bitter. Something must be seriously wrong with the heart which is working in a Jekyl and Hyde way, blessing to-day, and cursing to-morrow.

Let us take up our theme step by step and bring in other Scriptures which will corroborate the message and unveil the meaning of the Scripture before us.

"Therewith Bless We God":—

There is nothing that is more beautiful on the part of a Christian than the praise toward God which proceeds from his lips. Sinners may curse God and blaspheme His Holy Name, but "saints seek to praise and to honor Him".

Whether in sermon or in song, whether in word or in way, we should praise the Lord and bless the God of our salvation.

The Book of the Psalms is so filled with praise that we would do well if we would live more in its consideration.

We would sing praises to God for He is the King of the earth. We should sing praises not alone with our lips, but with our understanding. Our God is great and greatly to be praised, in the City of our God and in the mountain of His Holiness. Let all the world praise the Lord.

"Praise the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name".

Let us bring forth our trumpets and our cornets and make a joyful noise before the Lord.

Let the very sea roar and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.

Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together.

The last Psalm is one of the most marvelous manifestations of praise that we have in the Bible. Let us read it to you, and as we read, will you seek to join with your hearts and lips in praising the Lord.

"Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.

"Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

"Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.

"Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

"Praise him upon the loud cymbals; praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

"Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD".

"Therewith Curse We Men":—

When Peter who had just said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God", turned and said, "Pity Thyself, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee", the Lord Jesus rebuked him saying, "Get thee behind Me, Satan".

Is it not strange that the same lips that one moment will speak so worthily of God, will the next moment speak words of shameful import?

We have some things to say, which we trust all believers will hear and heed.

I. SAINTS SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM THOSE WHO WALK IN SIN.

When God urges that a Christian should not curse men, particularly his brethren, He does not mean to condone sin or to excuse it in any way. Neither does He mean that a Christian should become a party to another's sin, or shield another in their sin. He who shields a crook, is himself a crook.

There are, however, certain things which we should consistently hold in our attitude toward a sinning saint, or a sinning sinner.

First:—We should by no means have fellowship with such an one, or walk with him. The Word of God says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly". It also says, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the

way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away".

These words are written to be obeyed.

There are special words spoken about our attitude toward saints who sin. From them, particularly, Christians must withdraw. God has said, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness". Light cannot fellowship with darkness; a believer cannot walk with an unbeliever. God has also said, "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat".

II. CHURCHES SHOULD DIS-FELLOWSHIP THOSE WHO WALK IN SIN.

It was reported commonly among the Corinthians that there was fornication among them. Worse than that, those who sinned were puffed up, and had not mourned. The Holy Ghost wrote to the Church at Corinth and said, "In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and My Spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus".

These words are very plain. The Church that boasts of sinning saints in their fellowship is displeasing God. Its glorying is not good. God has said, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump".

III. SAINTS AND CHURCHES SHOULD NOT PRONOUNCE A CURSE AGAINST A BROTHER.

Whatever God's admonitions may be concerning withdrawal and dis-fellowship, there is not a word in the Bible that permits an individual Christian, or a group of Christians, to curse or even to criticise, in the spirit of cursing, a brother.

There are some things to which we must call particular attention:—

1. We Must Not Curse Our Brethren, because Satan Is the Accuser of All Such. You remember how in the days of old, the devil appeared with the sons of God before the throne of God and he began to accuse Job and to malign his integrity.

You remember how in the days of Christ, the Lord said unto the Apostle Peter, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat".

There is no doubt in my mind, at least, but that Satan had been accusing Peter before the Lord, and the Lord had given unto Satan the permission to sift Peter.

In the Book of Revelation, in chapter 12, we have the story of Satan cast down out of Heaven.

In verse 10, it says, "The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night". These words are weighty and will bear deep thought. Think of it! The old dragon, called the devil, and Satan, standing before God as an accuser of those for whom Christ died, as one cursing the brethren.

A little later in the Book of Revelation, we read that the antichrist blasphemed those who dwelt in the heavens.

For our part, we want to have neither part nor lot with Satan in the accusing of saints.

2. We Must Not Curse Our Brethren, because Vengeance Belongeth unto God. There are some things said by the Holy Ghost in the 12th chapter of Romans, which are apropo just now.

In verse 10, we are told to be kindly affectioned one toward another, with brotherly love.

In verse 14, we are told to bless them which persecute us; to bless and curse not.

In verse 17, we are instructed to recompense unto no man evil for evil.

In verse 19, we are urged as dearly beloved, to avenge not ourselves because God has said, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay".

In verse 20, we are told if our enemy hunger that we should feed him; if he thirst, we should give him drink.

In verse 21, we are instructed to overcome evil with good.

With these words before us, what is our conclusion? That we should separate ourselves from sinning brethren, we grant, but we insist that, under no condition, we should curse them. The spirit which says to a brother "Raca", or, "Thou fool"; the spirit which criticises him and maligns him, is the spirit of the devil.

All who read these words may not agree with us, but we believe that saints are seriously sinning and greatly grieving God when they bemean those who differ with them theologically, even though they be modernists of the deepest dye.

Let us not be misunderstood. Saints should contend for the faith once for all delivered. They

should refuse absolutely and utterly to walk together with unbelievers. They should separate themselves from men who defame the Cross, and decry the Son of God, but in all of this, they should be filled with the spirit of compassion and love, and never carried along by the spirit of bitterness or of envy and strife.

If Fundamentalists would do what God says, they would withdraw from those who walk in sin or in false doctrine. Then, instead of fighting, in the spirit of strife and contention, if they would begin to do a constructive work and preach the Gospel with power sent down from on high, we believe they would do more good, and more greatly please God. We grant that we have ourselves been contentious at times, but we have sought pardon from Him who has taught us to love our enemies, to pray for those who despitefully use us, and even to bless those who persecute us.

3. We Must Not Curse Our Brethren, because Our Brethren Are Those for Whom Christ Died. We wish for a moment to draw in the lines. We will eliminate from our consideration the unbeliever, and even the Modernist, who is "the wolf in sheep's clothing", and who has crept into our feasts of love, unwelcomed, defiling them.

We wish now to discuss, for a moment, our attitude toward the brother who sins, who is, indeed, a brother, and a brother for whom Christ died. Let us exclude all but such as these.

Let us remember that all accusations which are delivered against a brother are delivered against one with whom we must dwell forever in the eternal glories.

THE MESSAGE OF MATTHEW 18

In the 18th chapter of Matthew, the Lord Jesus is discussing, not the stalwart, strong and settled saints, but the weaker saints, even the children who believe in Him. He says, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea".

A little later, the Lord Jesus spoke of these little ones, saying, "Their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in Heaven".

By way of application, our Lord proceeded to give the parable of the man who had 100 sheep, one of which went astray. He said that the shepherd would leave the ninety and nine, and go out into the wilderness after the one which was lost.

After this illustration was given, Christ said, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother".

Then said Christ, "If he will not hear thee, then, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established".

Then said Christ, "If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican".

Would that saints might follow these instructions concerning erring brethren!

If some one says we can curse a brother who has become to us as a heathen and a publican, then we reply that such is not the case. A heathen man and

a publican is not a man to be cursed, by us. He is one to be loved and sought after and saved.

After these words were delivered by the Lord, and the parable was given, then Peter said unto Him, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times"?

Christ responded, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven".

In order to enforce His message concerning the attitude of a brother toward a sinning brother, Christ continued by telling the story of a certain man whose Lord commanded him to be sold for a debt. The servant fell down and worshiped him, seeking the patience of his lord and promising him ultimate payment. His lord forgave him. Afterward, the forgiven servant went out and found a fellow-servant who owed him one hundred pence. He laid hands on him, took him by the throat saying unto him, "Pay me that thou owest". His fellow servant fell down and besought him as his persecutor had at first besought his lord; but the servant who had been forgiven so great a debt, would not bear with or have patience with his fellow-servant, who owed to him so small a debt, but cast him into prison until he should pay the last farthing.

Then said Christ, "What would the lord of the first servant do unto him when he heard that he who had been forgiven of much, had refused to forgive another an insignificant debt"? His lord would be wroth and deliver him unto the tormentors. Christ then concluded: "So likewise shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses".

Surely, James was right when he said, "These things"; that is, blessing God and cursing our brethren, "ought not so to be".

4. We Must Not Curse Our Brethren because We Should Seek to Restore a Sinning Brother. The Holy Ghost in Galatians 6 has something to say of this:

> "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
>
> "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" *(Gal. 6:1,2).*

It is very easy, indeed, for us to find fault with, and to curse a brother, but the Lord said, "We should seek to restore him".

This is the spirit of which Christ spoke in Matthew 18, which we have just studied. What should be our attitude toward a man who has gone astray?

First of all, we should seek to win him; Secondly, If we fail to win him, we should dis-fellowship him; Thirdly, After he has been dis-fellowshiped, we should love him and seek to win him back to God.

There never is a time in the life of a Christian when God withdraws from him the instructions of Galatians 6:1. The spiritual are not to criticise, and to find fault. They are to seek to restore the wandering brother.

5. We Must Not Curse Our Brethren because We Shall Be Judged as We Judge. In Matthew 7, the beautiful words of the Sermon on the Mount are still continuing, and Christ is saying, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again".

We think that those who malign others and judge others should be very cautious.

Do we not remember the words of our Lord, how He taught the disciples to pray, **"Forgive us our** debts **as we forgive** our debtors"? Have we forgotten our Lord's conclusion? "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses".

I must remember that as I criticise and judge another, I am to be judged, in the same spirit.

Our observation has been this,—Let a man, who is a brother, sin, and let him be criticised by some other brother in a harsh and bitter way, it will not be long until the brother who criticised is himself overtaken in a fault; and until he, himself, is being judged of God and set at naught before the people.

6. We Must Not Curse Our Brethren, because We May Have Faults of Our Own. This is another word in Galatians 6, which we omitted for the time. It says, if we learn of a brother who is at fault that we should seek to restore him in the spirit of meekness; "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted".

In the 7th chapter of Matthew, the Lord Jesus Christ is very clear along this line. He says, he who beholds the mote in a brother's eye must first consider whether he have a beam in his own eye. Christ said, "Thou hypocrite, **first** cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye".

What right has the pot to call the kettle black?

Why should the man who is hunch-backed point the finger of scorn at the man who is stooped?

We all remember the story of the Publican and the Pharisee. The Publican confessed his own sins and the Pharisee helped him out. The Pharisee stood praying thus within himself, "I thank Thee that I pay tithes", etc. and then he added, "and that I am not like this poor Publican".

Christ, however, said that the Pharisee went home condemned and the Publican justified.

James, in concluding his marvelous statement which he made, as he was borne along by the Holy Ghost, said these final words: You will find them in verses 14, 15.

> "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.
> "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.
> "For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work".

Let us give heed to the voice of God. No end of confusion and of evil work has been brought about by the spirit of bitter envying and strife, which pervades too many professedly Spirit-filled and oft-times acknowledged leaders in religious life.

If we would be God's wise men, and endued with knowledge, we will show out of a good conversation, our works with meekness and wisdom. We will remember that the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. May God give us this "fruit of righteousness" which is sown in peace of them that make peace.

CHAPTER XIV.

"MESSAGE ON CARNALITY"

"MESSAGE ON CARNALITY"

James 4:1-11

WE often think of the 7th chapter of Romans, as giving us the greatest picture of the flesh in its conflicts, that we have in the Bible.

Then, we pass over into the 8th of Romans, in order to discover the victory of the Spirit over the flesh.

In addition to this, we frequently think of the Book of Galatians, particularly chapter 5:16-23, as giving a very concise statement concerning the lusting of the flesh against the Spirit, with the subsequent victory of the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit-filled life.

Most of us have overlooked the fact that the 4th chapter of James should be classed along with these others, as one of God's greatest pronouncements concerning the flesh and its lustings and the victory of the Spirit life over the flesh.

We are to consider to-day this chapter, from the viewpoint herein suggested and we pray that God will graciously add His blessing.

I. A WORLD OF MEN CORRUPT AT THE CORE.

The human heart is accurately described by James in verse 1, when he says, "Your lusts that war in your members". These lusts are common to all men.

The Word of God never under-estimates the power of the old nature, which we receive from the Adamic line. Sin is deep rooted in the heart. The

truth is, that everyone of us were born in sin. We came into the world, with a nature corrupted from the fall.

The human heart is described for us in Jeremiah 17:9. Here we read, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it"? These words are written by the Lord who searches the heart and tries the reins. He knows what is in man. He knows the ways and the fruits of his doings.

Jesus Christ, in speaking of the human heart, said in Mark 7:21, 22 and 23, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man".

The Lord Jesus Christ gave this X-ray picture of the conditions which indwell every natural heart. There are some, however, who imagine that when one accepts Christ as a Saviour and the regenerating work of the Holy Ghost occurs, that immediately the old nature is annihilated and ceases to exist. Such a conception is altogether erroneous. The new birth is not the changing of the old man, but the creation of a new. The new man is created in righteousness and true holiness, but the old man remains corrupt, according to deceitful lusts.

There are some who desire to curb the outflow from the human heart, forgetting that the fountain itself is the seat of the impurities which flow in the rivulet. In order to cleanse the rivulet, we must cleanse the fountain.

It would be a vain thing, indeed, for a man to dis-

cover an apple tree bearing bitter crab apples and then to knock off the fruit and give orders to the tree to bear sweet apples. Knocking off the fruit does not help the inner condition of the tree, at all. So, in the Christian life, something must occur besides doctoring the outflow and knocking off the fruit.

II. A PLACING OF RESPONSIBILITY.

The Holy Ghost is asking in verse 1, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members"?

We are passing now out of the realm of the unregenerated, into the realm of the regenerated. James is not talking to the unsaved, but to the saints among the twelve tribes scattered abroad.

We found out in our sermon of last week, that they were filled with bitter envyings and strife in their hearts, and had a wisdom that was earthly, sensual and devilish. James is now placing the responsibility for this sad condition that prevailed among these redeemed people.

There are several things which need to be carefully observed.

1. The Fact of the Abiding Presence of the Flesh. This, we have already suggested. These saints were saved, but the flesh was worrying them and predominating in their lives.

2. The Fact of the Conflict of the Flesh against the Spirit. James puts it this way, "Your lusts that war in your members".

Everybody is willing to grant that they have had personal experiences along these very lines. When

they would do good, they have felt evil was present with them. The evil they would not do, they did. The good they would do, they did not. They felt themselves brought into subjection, unto the sway of their flesh.

Paul wrote that, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other".

3. The Fact of Seeking to Satisfy the Flesh. James writes three things, "ye lust", "ye kill", "ye fight".

Strange, isn't it, that a child of God would ever give ear to the lustings of his old man. However, this is exactly what the Children of Israel did, after they had come out of Egypt under the blood, after they had been baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea, after they had eaten of the spiritual meat and had drunk of the spiritual rock, then they lusted after the flesh-pots, the melons and the garlic of Egypt. They tempted God and sought to turn back. They committed fornication. They became idolaters. They murmured.

Saints should never do any of these things, but alas, they do.

James says, "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not".

4. The Fact of Seeking God in Order to Satisfy the Flesh. The third verse is the most striking of all, the most condemnatory. It reads, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts".

Mark the four statements:

(1) "Ye lust".
(2) "Ye kill".
(3) "Ye fight".
(4) "Ye ask".

These things were all done in order to satisfy the lustings of their flesh. Three of these things, as first stated, had to do with ungodly methods. The fourth seems to be commendatory. The words, "Ye ask" suggest that they made their petitions to God, they prayed, they sought the Lord. They sought the Lord for the things they desired to have, and yet their asking was all wrong because the things they desired were those they should not have sought. They were not asking for anything in the will of God, they were asking for the satisfying of their own will. They were asking for things that would satisfy the demands of their unclean life. They asked that they might consume what they were asking upon their own lusts; that is, they wished to feed the flesh and its cravings.

III. A CONDEMNATION FROM GOD.

The Holy Ghost does not ignore the conditions that prevailed among these saints. He admits that they had wars and fightings among them, that they were under the control of the lustings of their flesh, but he does not condone the conditions that prevailed. He speaks in positive and uncompromising fashion. His condemnation is plain and positive. He says in verse 4, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God".

This adds fuel to the fire. In all of their lustings, they were not only appeasing their own unclean appetites and desires, but they were making themselves friends to the world. They were walking in worldly ways, they were living in worldly fellowships. This is wholly contrary to the will and purpose of God.

It was Balaam who could not curse Israel, but who could advise Balak to mix and mingle his people with the Israelites. Balaam knew that God demanded separation of Israel; and that amalgamation and federation with the Moabites would bring God's wrath. Therefore, he told Balak to carry on a world-mixing method, knowing that God would then curse the people whom he could not curse.

When Saul, the king of Israel, was commanded to slay the Amalekites, he spared Agag. When Achan went down to Jericho, he carried away certain Babylonish garments, and certain wedges of gold and silver.

This was all along the same line. Jesus called it plainly, spiritual adultery,—the mixing of saint with sinner in unhallowed fellowship,—the friendship of the believer with the unbeliever. This friendship with the world, James says, is enmity with God; and, "whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God".

Thus, we have seen the placing of the real responsibility for the wars and the fightings which came among the Children of Israel. They, perhaps, would like to have blamed the devil for it all, but the Lord said that these things proceeded from their own lusts, which warred in their members.

IV. ANOTHER CAUSE FOR THEIR SAD CONDITION.

In verse 5, we have another difficulty with the sinning sons scattered among the twelve tribes. The verse reads, "Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy"? There are two interpretations of this verse.

First, And the more probable one, is that their own spirit, their human spirit, was lusting to envy. This is our interpretation, because in verses 14 and 16 of the preceding chapter, we read of their having bitter envying and strife in their hearts and that where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. Besides, the Holy Ghost in the immediate context is speaking of their "lusts".

This interpretation certainly is true to facts. Where is he who has never felt that "spirit of envying", lusting within him? the desire to avenge one's self against another, or to lift one's self above another?

Second, There is another interpretation of this verse. It captalizes "the spirit" thus:—"The Holy Spirit that dwelleth within us lusteth to envy". This would make the Holy Spirit envious for His own. That the Spirit dwells within us, we know. But, does He lust to envy? That depends upon what you mean by your words.

"Our God is a jealous God". This verse might be made to read, "The Spirit that dwelleth in us, longeth to have us wholly to Himself." If this interpretation is the thought of the verse, then there was an added sin to all the other sins of these saints scattered abroad, in that they had failed to give

God, the Spirit, His rightful recognition. They had not yielded their bodies as temples to the Holy Ghost. They had not permitted the Spirit of God, who was in the throne room of their life, to take the throne. They were not filled with the Spirit.

This consideration suggests that there was a reason for their carnal lustings, and their friendship with the world,—they were not filled with the Spirit. Like Ananias and Sapphira, they had kept back part of the price. They had not given themselves wholly to God.

V. GOD'S PROMISE OF HELP.

After reading the dark pictures from verses 1 through 5, how refreshing is the statement of verse 6, "He giveth more grace". It makes us think of the 2nd chapter of Ephesians, where after the detailed description of a sinner lost in his sins is given, we read, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us", hath quickened us, and raised us, and seated us together with Himself in the heavens. "For by grace are ye saved".

These opening words of verse 6 remind us also of the 5th chapter of Romans, where we have the wonderful fivefold statement of God's "much mores". He says:

Wherever sin abounded, grace did "much more" abound.

If death reigned, life did "much more" reign.

If many were made dead through the offence of one, "much more" the grace of God and the gift by grace abounds to many by one Man, Jesus Christ.

If death reigned by one, "much more" the gift of righteousness reigns.

Being justified by His Blood, "much more" we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

Thus, it is refreshing, after this picture of the flesh is given by James, in such horrible details, to find the expression written, "He giveth more grace". With this statement grasped, we find several conjunctive statements, all of which are necessary to understand how this "grace" will become potent in the human life.

1. God Will Give More Grace to the Humble. This is the second part of verse 6, "Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble".

2. God Giveth More Grace to the Submissive. Verse 7 reads, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you".

3. God Giveth More Grace to the Cleansed and Purified. This is seen in verse 8, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded".

4. God Gives More Grace to Those Who Are Afflicted and Who Mourn and Weep. In verse 9, we read, "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness".

5. God Giveth More Grace and Lifts Up Those Who Abase Themselves. This is the reiteration of the first statement. Verse 10 reads, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up".

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Now, these five statements which we have just given from the Book of James, show how grace is made operative. The first verses of the chapter have shown us the sad condition of those who walk in the flesh. Beginning with verse 6, we have described in detail, the way grace works for victory. Let us take these five steps up, one at a time.

(1) Victory Is Attained by Humility. The proud in heart can never get anything from God. The humble are they who confess their helplessness, who cry out in their need.

It is the contrite heart, the broken spirit that appeals to God. God never will hear the cry of those who are proud and lifted up. If we get anything from God, we must get it on our knees. We must get it with our faces in our hands. We must get it by way of confession and contrition.

The flesh cannot boast and get favor from Heaven. That was the great sin of the Corinthians. They had among them those who had committed fornication and the Bible says that they were glorying in it and their glorying was their shame.

David never got help until, with his bones roaring within him all the day, he fell down before God and prayed the prayer of the penitent, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness". He confessed that he was shapen in iniquity. He cried out that he was guilty before God. He brought before God the sacrifices of a broken spirit. Then it was that God did not despise him.

(2) Victory Is Attained by Submission. Verse 7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God". Submission is another word for "consecration", or "surrender" or, the "yielded life". God wants us to

bring all we are and have and lay it at His feet. He wants us to bring our bodies as a living sacrifice to Him, a reasonable service. This is more than humility. This is presentation. This is giving back to God the life He bought with His own Blood. This is the expression of a spirit of obedience, of willingness, not only to give, but to go; not only to be, but to do.

We submit ourselves to God that He may work out His plan and purpose in us. Whenever there reigns in the human will the least bit of resistance to God, victory is impaired. We must say to the Lord, "I am Thine and all that I have is Thine." Our surrender must be unconditional. There must be no reservations. Everything must be laid upon the altar.

(3) VICTORY IS ATTAINED BY BEING CLEANSED AND PURIFIED. Verse 8 says, "Cleanse your hands, * * purify your hearts". This is the message of the whole Bible, "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord".

We have just been speaking of the yielded life, but that life, to be acceptable to God, must be a cleansed life. In a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but of wood and of iron and of stone. Now, that vessel only is accounted worthy for service, by the master, which is clean. Be it of precious metal or of the more common, it must be clean. Therefore, the Bible says, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use".

(4) VICTORY IS ATTAINED THROUGH WEEPING AND MOURNING. This may not seem a very pleasant

pathway by which to mount into a life of overcoming. However, it is the only way. God wants to see a tear in the eyes of those who have wandered from Him.

David forgave Absalom his sin too soon. Absalom had not mourned or wept over what he had done. We all know the result. Absalom became guilty of high treason against his father and his father's kingdom.

God cannot put into the place of authority and power, those who have sinned, until their laughter has been turned into mourning. When such is the case, then the Lord God will work a work within their hearts that will mean the high reaches of victory over the flesh and over the self-life. Thus it is that we have the final statement of James,—"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up".

Let us re-capitulate as we close. We have had, first of all in James 4:1-5, the dark picture of the excesses of carnalities; second, beginning with verse 6, we have had the way out and the return. We have seen the defeat of the first verses turned into victory. Those who were victims are victors. The Lord has lifted them up. With all of this made clear, the Holy Ghost draws his conclusion:

VI. THE CONCLUSION.

Verse 11 says, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law".

James, by way of conclusion, returns to the message he had sought to expound, as we pointed it

out in our past two sermons, on the tongue. Now, after he, by the Spirit of God, has told us the way out; he concludes with the admonition, "Speak not evil one of another".

We are forced to this conclusion: The man whose tongue is full of bitterness and criticism against a brother is guilty of an offence which is most loathesome to Almighty God.

We are also forced to this final statement—that the victorious life, in its mountain-top experience, is made manifest when the victor does not speak evil of his brother.

In our next address, we will seek to finish this chapter and go into the further light that God gives in chapter 5.

CHAPTER XV.

"THE ONE LAWGIVER"

"THE ONE LAWGIVER"

James 4:12

THE verse of Scripture which we have for our consideration to-day is brief, but it is marvelously full of truth. Let us quote for you, the verse to which we refer. "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another"?

We wanted to cover a great deal of scope to-day, but as we read this verse, we begin to see such marvels of truth hidden within, that we feel we cannot get beyond it. There are four things, which we have to consider:

I. The Fact That There Is One Lawgiver.

II. The Fact That There Is One Lawgiver Who Can Save.

III. The Fact That There Is One Lawgiver Who Can Destroy.

IV. The Contingent Question, "Who Art Thou That Judgest Another"?

Let us consider these in their order.

I. THERE IS ONE LAWGIVER.

We take it that the phrase suggests that there is but one supreme Lawgiver; one, who has absolute right and authority to make laws; one, and only one Lawgiver, who can save; one, and only one Lawgiver who can destroy.

The first picture that we see of God, in Genesis 1, is of God as the Creator. "God created the Heaven and the earth". However God regulated

what He created by the laws of day and of night. He created the waters and He regulated them by certain laws; "let them be gathered together into one place". The boundaries or laws of the waters are the banks and the sand, that God has placed about them. This law boundary says, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further".

It was not until God had created man, however, that He gave definite laws concerning that which they should do, and should not do. He said, "Of every tree of the garden thou **mayest** freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou **shalt not** eat of it".

As we pass out of Genesis into the Book of Exodus, we tarry for a moment at the foot of Mount Sinai. There we behold the mountain mid quakings and thunderings and a mighty tempest. It was a terrible sight to those who gathered around. Moses disappeared in the mountain heights, and there he met God and received from Him His Law, written upon two tables of stone. There are some things about the Law of God, upon which we may now dwell for a moment.

1. **His Laws Are Righteous.** We mean by that, that they are right and just to the last degree. God in giving His Law is not arbitrary; that is, He does not give a Law in order to show His authority, or manifest His power as a demagogue.

We have read of a certain king, who ordered everybody to appear before him on a certain morning, at a certain hour. When his people had gathered around him, one dared to ask him, for what he had bid them come. He is said to have responded,

"I told you to come merely that I might show that I had authority over you."

God never has given such a law. His laws are righteous altogether.

2. **His Laws Manifest His Character.** God never demands of another, that which exceeds what He Himself is and does. His precepts are based upon His own standards of righteousness, of holiness and of justice. Everything that God requires of us, is what He is, Himself, inherently.

3. **His Laws Are Beneficent.** God's Laws are never given merely to enforce His will. They are given because His will works our good.

This is always the effort of those who form the laws of the country. Take the laws which govern the traffic, controlling the speed and the movements of the automobile. Sometimes, these laws seem arbitrary and unkind and even inconsiderate; yet, each law that is made is made for the public good. Its object is to save life, not to destroy it; to protect and to provide safety, not to foster and to further disaster and death.

Wherever you read of any law in the Word of God, it has hidden within it an expression of God's love toward His people, and of His desire to help and not to hinder them in their human welfare.

We believe, for instance, that every law which God gave to the Children of Israel in the olden days, even those laws governing hygiene, and diet, were beneficent. God did not place the ban upon the eating of certain meats, merely from the viewpoint of a religious fanaticism or rite. His Laws demonstrate that the eating of certain condemned meats, etc., were hurtful to the physical man.

4. **His Laws Are Unbiased.** Wherever you find God's Laws at work, they are working to build up and to sustain all people, not to save a certain class and to destroy another class. His Laws are unbiased.

God never gave Laws to protect the favored rich against the despised poor. The Word that was spoken to a Jew is applicable to a Gentile; that which is demanded of the rich is demanded of the poor. God never prepared two codes of ethics. He is not moved by the flaunting flattery of men, or carried away by their boasted wealth or pride of attainment.

5. **God's Laws Are Marvelous in Their Scope.** The Word of God covers, in its laws, practically every line of human thought and conduct. There are laws of sanitation and laws of conservation. There are laws of government; of family government and of national government. There are laws of marriage, and there are laws of parenthood. God has left nothing uncovered in the marvelous scope of His holy requirements.

6. **His Laws Are Twofold in Their Demands.** All of the laws of God can be divided under two great heads. First, they convey our duties toward God, and secondly, they convey our duties toward our fellowmen. It was for this reason that the Ten Commandments were written on two tables of stone. The first, second, third and fourth, carried God's commands concerning man's duties toward God. The second table carried six commandments concerning our duties toward one another. All the laws of God fall under these two great divisions.

7. **His Laws Have Penalties, and Enforced Pen-**

alties. All laws to be effective must be enforced to be useful; and all laws disobeyed, must carry punishment.

It is for this cause that the nations of the earth have a vast system of penalties covering their laws. He who keeps the laws of the country is not accountable to justice, but he who breaks them must be brought to justice and punished as becomes his offence.

8. **His Laws Manifest Man's Sin.** It was not until the Law came, expressing God's inherent holiness and marvelous character, that man could fully realize his own inherent sin and corrupt nature.

Paul said, "I was alive without the Law once, but when the Commandment came, sin revived, and I died". He said that by the Law is the knowledge of sin. He also said, "I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet".

The Book of Romans presents the most wonderful of messages on God's Law.

"I was alive without the Law once", but, "when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died". That was the way Paul felt about the Law.

The Law was holy and the Commandment was holy and just and good. Therefore, when the Commandment came, it made sin to appear sin. Through it, sin became exceedingly sinful. Thus, as the Law was revealed, man's own sin was revealed.

It is just like dropping a plumb line down by a crooked wall. It reveals the fact that the wall is not straight, so the Law made manifest the sin of the human heart.

9. **His Laws Drive the Breakers of the Law to**

Christ for Pardon. The effect of the Law was first, the ser e of sin, but, secondly, its effect was the seeking of pardon.

The Bible speaks of the Law as a schoolmaster which drives us to Christ. The Law becomes a stethescope, which listens to the heart beats of the moral life and reveals whether the heart skips, or is wrong in any way. When that revelation comes, the stethescope does not heal. Neither does the Law heal, but it drives us to the great Physician of our souls.

The preaching of the laws of God create within the human heart a sense of sin and a need for pardon. "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick". It is when a sinner sees his sin that he seeks his Saviour.

10. **His Laws Drive One to the Living Christ for Power.** He who knows God will honor His Law. However such an one will realize his own inability to keep the Law of God. A man is, necessarily, just as far short of obeying the Law, in deed, as he is short of the glory of God, in character.

If the laws of God manifest the holiness of God and acclaim the character of God, then the very extent to which man breaks those laws shows his deficiency in holiness and in character.

He who boasts that he has kept the Law, boasts that he is as holy as God. What does the Word say? The Word says that all have fallen short of the glory of God. Expressed in another way—the Law has spoken and, as a result, every mouth is stopped and all the world stands guilty before God.

The Christian comes along and he wills to keep every Law of God. However, in the flesh, he can-

not keep it. Therefore we read, "What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the **righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us**, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit".

Love is the fulfilment of the Law, because "The fruit of the Spirit is love".

When the natural man tries to keep the Law of God, he is forced to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death"? He feels that he is altogether undone. He sees himself serving with his flesh the law of sin. He longs for victory to keep the Law, because the breaking of the Law dishonors God. Finally, he learns that "the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus", makes him "free from the law of sin and death", and exultantly he cries, "Eureka".

The carnal mind is not subject to the Law of God, neither, indeed, can be. They that are in the flesh cannot please God, because they cannot keep the Law of God. Nevertheless, when the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus dwells in us; and when we listen to the voice of that Spirit and walk after that Spirit, we will find that the Spirit will not fulfil the desires of the flesh. We then discover a new power dwelling within us, through which we may keep the Law of God.

II. THERE IS ONE LAWGIVER WHO CAN SAVE.

There are many lawgivers, but there is only One Lawgiver who can save, in spite of a broken Law.

Let us consider the great law courts of our country. Our legislators have made laws and put them on the statute books. They not only make laws, but they appoint judges, and judges over judges, to try law-breakers. Mark this, however—in this great country of ours, there is no such an institution, as a house for the salvation of the criminal, and the law-breaking class. **The objective of the law is to condemn, not to save** those who break the Law. If a judge is ever so sorry for the one who stands before him; he cannot in justice show clemency. If he does show it, in showing it, he dishonors the law, lowers its standard, belittles its power, casts shame on its righteousness. Clemency toward the lawless creates criminals.

Our God is a just God. He cannot, and He will not clear the guilty. He cannot and He will not receive into His presence, the unclean.

The idea that is predominant in many a mind is that when a sinner gets sorry for his sins and promises to turn from them and do better, then God gets sorry for the sinner, and forgives him, overlooking the fact of the offended law.

Such a conception is absolutely unscriptural. God never forgives merely upon a sense of sorrow for the sinner, or even of love for a sinner. God has given Laws, His Laws are holy Laws. His Laws are righteous Laws. His Laws are beneficent Laws. The majesty of these Laws, God must, and does sustain. He never lets down their bars. He never changes their penalties. No matter what the sighs and the sobs which may follow the sins of the people, His Laws remain inevitable in their demands,

sustained in their judgments, and unremitting in their penalties.

We have now come to a very solemn consideration. God loved the sinner, but God's love could not over-ride His justice. God must uphold the honor of His character and the glory of His Law. The problem, therefore, which confronted the Most High was, as Job put it, "How can God be just, and the justifier of the guilty"? Thank God, He found a way, and the way He found sustains every majesty of the broken Law, upholds its honor and its integrity! Men have never found such a way. There is but one lawgiver **who can save.**

How does God do this? In Romans, we read:—

"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

"Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

"To declare, I *say,* at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" *(3:3, 25, 26).*

Thank God, we have in the verses above God's revealed plan of redemption. This plan declares God's righteousness "for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God".

Think of it! The Cross of Christ not only saves those who are on the earth to-day from the broken Law, but it is effective from Adam, down to the last man who shall live, until God shall say that time is no more. All who by faith step in under the Blood are declared free from the Law.

"Free from the Law, O happy condition,
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission,
Curs'd by the Law and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

"Now are we free—there's no condemnation,
Jesus provides a perfect salvation;
'Come unto Me,' oh, hear His sweet call,
Come, and He saves us once for all."

In the first chapter of Romans, Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; * * for therein is the righteousness of God revealed". This verse does not primarily mean that man's righteousness is made possible by the Gospel; it means that God's righteousness is revealed in the Gospel. That is, in the Gospel of Christ's death and burial, resurrection and ascension, coming and reign, with its contingent salvation to man, God is righteous.

While the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; yet, the grace of God in righteousness is likewise revealed. Through a substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ, God is acclaimed just, and the justifier of those who believe. God has not set aside His Law, gotten sorry and forgiven the sinner; He has sustained His Law, placing its penalty on Christ in His death upon the Cross, and saved the sinner who believes upon Him, for evermore.

III. THERE IS ONE LAWGIVER WHO IS ABLE TO DESTROY.

This part of the verse almost staggers us. The same one who is able to save from the offence of the Law, is able to destroy those who reject the Divine Substitute.

There are some people who magnify the grace of God, and His love, who minify the wrath of God and His judgments. They say that Christ came to save and not to destroy; that God is love, and not wrath; that He is mercy and not condemnation.

This is all very true, but it is true only of those who by faith step in under the protection of the Substitute.

The reason there is One lawgiver who can save is because God knew how to place the penalties of the Law upon the Saviour. Jesus Christ is Heaven's scapegoat, for earth's sinners. He is the One who suffered, the Just for the unjust; in Him the believer is set free. However the same Lawgiver who is able to save, and who does save; is also able to destroy, and does destroy. He who spared not His own Son, as He suffered for sinners; will certainly not spare sinners who refuse to believe and to trust in the Substitute Saviour, Jesus Christ. God is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Second Thessalonians 1:7 and 8 gives us a tremendous and startling statement. It says, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ". Then, it adds, "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power".

The Lord Jesus Christ will come again to be glorified in His saints, through their salvation.

1. There Is a Parable Which We Might Consider Just Here. One may escape the clutches of man's law and evade its penalties. Not every law-breaker, among men, receives the just penalties which are due him.

We have had, just recently, a very sad illustration of what seems to be an effort on the part of outstanding men to buy up a jury and to evade the

penalties of the law. Such things have been done in the past and may be done in the future.

Some lawyers will stand before a judge, or a jury, and make every possible plea to deliver their clients from the power and penalty that is due them for their sin. Many a man has missed the death chair or the hang-man's rope, who legally should have been executed. Many a man has escaped the penitentiary who should have been housed within it walls.

2. Man Cannot Escape God. This is the other side of the question. Man's laws are inefficient. God's laws are efficient.

There is a question propounded in the second chapter of Romans, verse 3. It is this, "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God"?

The Psalmist of old said, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into Heaven Thou art there, if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there".

A sinner may take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, but he cannot get away from God's hand. A sinner may say, "Surely, the darkness shall cover me", but he will discover that the dark, is light about him. God will compass his reigns and cover him. God will search him out.

If the guilty should climb to the top of Carmel, God will bring him down. There is nothing that is not naked and open to Him, with whom we have to do. So, we accept the truth of the statement

made in those profound words of the Holy Ghost in James—"There is One lawgiver who can destroy".

When the Great White Throne judgment is set, the dead, small and great, **must** stand before God. There will be no way of escape. The sea will give up the dead which are in it, death and hell will deliver up the dead which are in them, and every man shall be judged, according to his works.

IV. WHO ART THOU THAT JUDGEST ANOTHER?

After the Holy Ghost in James, has said there is but one lawgiver who can save, and one lawgiver who can destroy, He casts out this tremendous question, "Who art thou that judgest another"?

When anyone sits in judgment upon another, he is a lawmaker, and he seeks to be an enforcee of the Law.

We find now that the Holy Ghost is continuing the same message which we have had for the past three sermons, the message about the tongue running riot, as it blesses God and condemns a brother; the message against this criticising harangue, that so many are continually practicing against a brother for whom Christ died. God is asking, "Why should we judge another"? God has committed all judgment to the Son.

To a man who would judge another, there are four things we would like to say.

1. Dost Thou Know. O Man, the Ins and the Outs, and the All in All of the Man Whom Thou Judgest? Dost thou know his comings in, and his goings out? Understandest thou his thoughts afar off ? Is there nothing in him that is hid to thee?

Why dost thou condemn him whom thou dost not know and canst not see or grasp or comprehend?

2. Art Thou Thyself Righteous? Thou who wouldst condemn thy brother, thou art a maker of law. Does the law which thou dost make manifest thine own righteousness? Hast thou any beam within thine own eye? Thou who art determined to remove the mote from thy brother's eye.

Art thou, thyself, right with God?

The men who gathered around Job and let their tongues run riot with ribaldry, and ridiculous contentions were condemning one who was by far more righteous than they. Let the brother who condemns another know that he himself is not under condemnation. God has a right to condemn, because God is right. In the condemnation of the sinner, he never flays Himself.

3. Canst Thou Provide a Substitute? Before thou makest thyself a judge, see if thou canst walk in the garden, in the cool of the day and pronounce thy curse, with an accompanying promise of cure. God did this. He said "Cursed art thou", but, He also said, "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head". In this, He proclaimed how Jesus Christ should be made a curse for us.

Remember, that He whom God appointed **Judge,** is also Saviour. Let none, then, seek to ascribe to themselves that which God the Father has given to God the Son. A **Judge with God's fiat of approval MUST LIKEWISE BE a Saviour.** How can we rightly judge a brother, until we possess the spirit of love toward the condemned, which God the

Son had when He went to the Cross to suffer for those who sinned?

4. Canst Thou Provide a Just Recompense? Before a man judges another, he should first, know all things concerning the man he judges; secondly, he should be righteous himself, as God is righteous; thirdly, he should be able to provide a substitute; and now fourthly, and last of all, **he should be able to provide a just recompense.**

Suppose, one does judge a brother and condemn him. Can he rightfully pronounce the penalty that is due the man for his sin? He cannot. Sin continues forever in its fruitage. God only can judge every man according as his work shall be. The unsaved shall all receive as they have done, whether good or bad.

Our advice, yea, our plea to our brethren is that we judge not one another, and that we avenge not ourselves.

CHAPTER XVI.

"WHAT IS YOUR LIFE"?

"WHAT IS YOUR LIFE"?

WE are taking up to-day the consideration of James 4:13, through 5:8. There is a two-fold natural division. The first one is suggested by the expression, "Go to now" in verse 13. The second division is the same expression in chapter 5:1, "Go to now".

The first, discusses the boastings of the tongue; the second, the corruption of rich men.

As a general subject, we are taking the theme, "What is your life"? We take this because the question is asked in verse 14, and it conveys a most heart-searching query. We trust that during the whole address everybody will be asking themselves, Is there a message for me in what the Holy Spirit is saying through James? Is my life as it should be? Do I stand clear from any of these charges that are laid down against many of the first century saints? Am I better than they?

Our first division is, "The boastings of the tongue". We state it thus:

I. THE TONGUE BOASTETH GREAT THINGS.

Let us linger a moment, while we quote the Scripture, so you will have it clearly before your mind.

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

"Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

"For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

"But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin" *(James 4:13-17).*

There are several very important things which we have to say:

1. The Tongue Boasts Its Self-Sufficiency. Verse 13 says, "Go to now, ye that say, * * **we will** go, * * and **buy** and **sell** and **get gain**".

How easy it is for us to assert our own sufficiency!

There is a motto that has been carried by the Baraca Bible Class. It is this, "We Do Things." Now, I am for the Baracas. I love them, and thank God for their great work. I knew Mr. Hudson, personally, and intimately and was myself a member of the National Committee of Baracas. However, there is a danger in the motto, "We Do Things."

The expression was suggested by a passage which reads, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me". That is very true,—**through Christ** we can do things, but, the motto, "We Do Things", ignores Christ, without meaning to do so.

God has given various warnings in the Bible against man's trust in his own arm and in his own prowess. He speaks very strongly about those who trust in the flesh and in the arm of flesh.

In Deuteronomy 8, there is this warning, "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God * * Lest, when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is

multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord thy God * * And thou say in thine heart, **My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth".**

Men to-day need to remember that it is the Lord God who giveth them power to get wealth.

When Christ said to the disciples, "All ye shall be offended because of Me", Peter immediately showed the self-sufficiency of his own heart by saying, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I". Would that saints might remember their own weaknesses. It is not in a man to order his own steps.

The branch apart from the vine can do nothing. It cannot bear fruit unless it abides in the vine. Neither can a child of God do anything that is acceptable with the Father, apart from Christ.

Paul said we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; "but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith".

2. The Tongue Boasteth Its Self-Security. Let us mark the words of James once more, "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain".

The tongue dares to prophesy its future, and to proclaim what it is going to do by and by. How can a man boast of to-morrow? Yet, this is the spirit that dominates many people.

You remember the story of the Rich Farmer. He said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry".

God immediately said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee".

In Isaian 56:10-12, there are certain false prophets described. They are spoken of as "blind", and "ignorant" and as "dumb dogs". They are "greedy dogs" that never have enough. They are all looking for their own gain, from their own quarter. They say, "I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant". They certainly spoke with arrogance about the morrow.

Men may propose, but God will dispose. No man knows what shall be on the morrow.

3. The Tongue Boasts Its Self-Ambition. The verse says, "We will go * * and buy and sell and get gain". This is the ambition of many a life. The "almighty" dollar is their god. It seems to be the consuming passion with such to add house to house, and land to land until there shall be no more room. They seem to have little care about how they get it, just so they get it. This admonition on the part of James is strikingly important.

It was Paul who wrote to Timothy and said that "Godliness with contentment is great gain". He also said, "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content".

It is still true that they who "will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition".

It is still true that "the love of money is the root of all evil".

It is still true that those who covet after money

have "erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows".

Why should a Christian say, "We will go into such a city to day or to morrow and **buy** and **sell** and **get gain**"? God has said, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things". We do not mean that men of God should not do honest work and seek to make a livelihood, or even to get gain. We do contend that the spirit described, both in the Epistle of Timothy and James, is the spirit of the love of money.

The ideal of getting gain as James describes it, is not to have in order to give, but to have to hold and to hoard. We will see this more clearly as we go into the next chapter, James 5.

No man has a right to lay up **for himself** treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. He does have a right to labor that he may have to give to him that needeth. We now have

II. GOD'S STIRRING RESPONSE TO MAN'S BOASTING.

God says three things—

1. Ye Know Not What Shall Be on the Morrow. Why should we boast of to-morrow, when to-morrow is hidden to us? We should buy to-day up for God and use to-day for His glory.

> **"One step I see before me,**
> **'Tis all I need to know.**
> **For o'er each step of my onward path,**
> **He makes new light to glow."**

We do not know what lies ahead of us and it is well that we do not. If we knew our coming suc-

cesses and victories, we might become vain. If we knew the disappointments and struggles that await us, we might become discouraged. It is far better to live a day at a time. The prayer that Christ taught His disciples was, "Give us **this day** our **daily** bread", not "Give us this day our bread for **to-morrow**".

2. Your Life Is as a Vapour. "It is even as a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away".

Everything about us is passing; nothing is permanent. The very heaven above us, and the earth on which we dwell shall pass away with a great noise. The elements shall melt with fervent heat. Everything that vain man is building upon the earth will crumble and be consumed—nothing will be left.

The only enduring thing among men is the Word of God,—it abideth forever. But what about our life?

Peter tells us in his First Epistle, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away". This may not please the man who vainly imagines that he will abide forever in the flesh and dwell from generation to generation among men,—but it is the truth.

There is one chapter over in Genesis, chapter 5, where one feels he is walking through a cemetery, reading epitaphs. It reads like this:—"Adam lived * *, and he died. Seth lived, * * and he died. Enos lived, * * and he died. Cainan lived, * * and he died"; and so it goes on until in verses 21-24, it says, "Enoch lived * * and he was not; for God took

him". Every man on earth up to that time had died, with the exception of Enoch. After Enoch, the record continues, "he lived and he died", until we come to Noah. Had God written the story of the whole race, only once again would it be recorded, "He was not; for God took him". Elijah went up in a chariot of fire, into Heaven. All others have "lived and died".

This being the case, why should a vain man boast of what he will do on the morrow? We may not all die, for the Lord may come and we too may be taken up in the air; but we cannot boast of the morrow, because at such an hour as we think not the Son of Man cometh.

Life at best is brief. The 90th Psalm says, "Thou * * sayest, Return ye children of men. * * Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep; in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. * * For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told". Even if a man lives to fourscore, he is soon cut off and he flies away.

We need to ask God to teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

3. Ye Ought to Say. What is it that God tells us that we ought to say? Since "we know not what will be on the morrow"; and since "our life is as a vapour", we ought to say, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that".

Our very breath is in His hand. Everything we do is subject to His will.

Too many men are cutting God out in their "figurings". One of the wealthy men of the world was said to have promised his physician a great amount of money if he would give him five minutes to live, but the physician stood helpless before the dying man.

God has our lives in His hands. He holds the key. He guides the way. It is in Him that we live, we move, and we have our being.

It was to Belshazzar that God said, through Daniel, "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, thou hast not glorified".

How vain it is for a man to boast of any accomplishment, apart from God! There is nothing that we are, and nothing that we can do, save as He leads the way, and permits, and gives power.

III. THE RICH MAN'S DOOM.

The 5th chapter of James opens by giving a description of the man who had come into the certain city to buy, and to sell, and to get gain. We will have to be somewhat brief in the consideration of this man, or, this set of men, as our time is hurrying by. There are three things said about them.

1. Their Riches Are Corrupted. I suppose that the average man imagines that a dollar is a dollar, and that one dollar is just as clean as another dollar. However, God speaks of riches that are corrupted. This must have reference, first of all, to the fact that they are gotten by evil gain; second. to the fact that they have been kept to the hurt and the corruption of their possessor. First, they were gotten by corruption; and secondly, they have corrupted the one who got them.

We dare to say that not all rich men are unclean and Godless, but we do say that the possession of riches certainly has a great pull at the heart of their owner, towards paths of unrighteousness and of evil.

2. Their Gold Is Cankered. This is a very solemn charge. God does not criticise them for having money pass through their hands, but He does criticise them for holding their money until it is cankered. He says unto them, that the rust of their money shall witness against them, and burn their flesh as fire.

God never withheld His good things from us. He crammed the very earth with wealth and with riches, but He did not "bank" His wealth. He did not hedge it in. He did not put it where it could not be gotten. God has, but He does not hoard. He gives. He imparts.

The rich man of whom we spoke a moment ago said that he would tear down his barns and build larger barns. His idea was to store away his goods for his own future consumption. He addressed his soul and said, "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years". He was living out exactly what we have here. His gold and silver was cankered, and covered with rust. God required his soul of him that night, and he had a witness against him, that ate up his flesh as fire.

Men who luxuriate and give themselves over to pleasure in their lives should consider the words of God through James, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you".

If the rich man does not want to feel the fury of

the fires of God's judgment, let him turn loose his coin. Let him use it to provide provision to the saints, and ( ) meet their needs.

3. Their Witness Which Condemns. Here is what God says about these rich men.

(1) YE HAVE HEAPED TREASURE TOGETHER FOR THE LAST DAYS. There is a twofold suggestion here. First, ye have heaped treasure together **during** the last days, or, **in** the last days. There seems to be here an anticipation of conditions which will prevail at the Coming of our Lord.

At the end times, rich men will be upon the earth who will hoard their money, and do certain other things, which we are about to notice. This is, then, one of the signs of the times. There is no doubt but that we are living in the day of the supremacy of the rich.

The second suggested meaning of this text is that ye have heaped treasure **for** the last days; that is, ye have heaped treasure for the fire, the fires of judgment which will be sent forth from God, at the end of the age.

If the rich man knew that the cities of the nation were going to fall, and that all the glory which his money is making possible, was going to pass away, he might seek to lay up his treasures where they would never be consumed. Men who are hoarding their money, or who are building great estates for their own pleasure and gratification, are carrying in the wood for the greatest bon-fire the world has ever known. God has said it, and God is true.

(2) YE HAVE HELD BACK THE HIRE OF THE LABORERS. This is God's second charge. Rich men have forced others, to pile up riches for them; while

they have not allowed the "others" to enter into the fruit of their labors.

The working man reaps the field of the rich man, not to fill his own barn, but to fill the barn of the rich. That is all right, in part, but God demands that proper wages shall be given. He says here, that the hire of the laborer was kept back by fraud.

(3) Ye Have Lived in Pleasure. This is God's third charge. He brings out His condemnatory words, "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter".

Multitudes are living in pleasure, while hearts that ache, and spirits that break are groaning under the burden of poverty and pain. They are nourishing their own hearts, while the multitudes are un-nourished. They fiddle, and loaf, and play, while death stalks through the streets, scattering dark despair, everywhere it goes.

(4) Ye Have Condemned and Killed the Just. There is a suggestion in these words, that rich men have crawled up to the high place of their present attainment, upon the shoulders and, perhaps, the prostrate forms of those whom they have wronged. They live because some one else was killed. The slain were not shot down with the assassin's bullet, but nevertheless they were shot down, legally, of course.

We know the rich man excuses his villainy, in that he has killed the just. He throws out the fine fiat, "business is business." He goes to church on Sunday, and serves the Lord, but on Monday

and Tuesday and Wednesday, he robs the widows and the orphans.

Tom Lawson, author of "Frenzied Finance", has said, "I have seen the rich man on Sunday weep bitter tears as he has listened to the rehearsal of the woes and misery of the poor, and I have seen him heap the plate high with bills of large denomination, but in the earnings of the week, they know no God."

We feel that there is much of this "stir" in the land. Alas, some of it, is going on under the guise of a supposed and professed religion.

IV. THE SAINTS' FINAL REWARD.

He who lives in the midst of these days, when men are saying, "We will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain", he who is living in the midst of the slayings of rich men, should remember God's tender and loving suggestions concerning the final joys of His own people.

He says concerning the rich, "They shall weep and howl". "Their miseries will come upon them". Unto the saint, who has been condemned and killed, He says, "Resist not". Then, he adds these wonderful words:—

> **"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.**
>
> **"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh"** ***(James 5:7, 8).***

We who name the Name of our Lord do not need the protection of labor unions to help us out against the rich who oppress. God has told us, "Avenge

not yourselves". We should quietly slip our hand up into His, and place our heart in His keeping, knowing that His Coming draweth nigh.

Some time, we may do what these saints among the twelve tribes scattered abroad did. We may bemoan our lot. God, however, says to us, "Be patient, for the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh".

How beautifully does the first chapter of James, with verse 4, shine out?—

"Let patience have her perfect work". And, with verse 2, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations".

Linked on to this statement of James 5:7 and 9, how marvelously true is the expression, "Let the rich rejoice in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away"; and, "So shall the rich man fade away in his ways".

I say, how marvelously are James' first words linked to the words we are studying to-day. "Your life is as a vapour", fits in with, "Go to now, ye rich men".

We have discovered that the Book of James, instead of being a mixture of detached statements, is a most graciously systematized Book. After the Holy Ghost has given warning upon warning against saints being impatient and allowing their tongues to fly off at random, against conditions which prevail against them; He comes back once more, and says, "Be patient".

Then, He adds in verse 9, "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door". This verse links us back to the verse of our sermon of

last week, "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy".

If the Lord will avenge us against those who persecute us, and hate us and despitefully use us, if He is a Judge who stands at the door ready to avenge His elect, let His elect be patient and quietly await that blessed day, that glorious day, when He shall appear from Heaven.

CHAPTER XVII.

"THE END OF THE LORD"

"THE END OF THE LORD"

JAMES 5:10-20.

WE are now coming to the final message on the Book of James and we are to consider some splendid, inspired statements concerning the Christian life in its final outlook. Our subject is suggested by verse 11, where it says, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord".

In discussing this final word, we have decided to group our message around five statements:

I. The Coming of the Lord.

II. The End of the Lord.

III. The Place of Prayer in the Present Distress.

IV. Example of Prayer in the Present Distress.

V. A Final Plea.

I. THE COMING OF THE LORD.

James says, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the Coming of the Lord".

He is speaking of the Coming of the Lord here as the blessed culmination which will bring glory to every suffering saint. It is the time of the gathering of the fruit. It is the day of rewards.

James says that "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain". He does not weary himself and become discouraged with his well doing. He knows that in due season he will reap if he faints not.

The harvest of the earth cannot be obtained in

the early days of sowing. There must be, first of all, the toil and labor which is necessary before the fruit shall come. The Christian should not be discouraged because he does not immediately enter into his rewards. The Word of God teaches us to be patient.

The man who digs for gold is willing to spend years, if need be, of preparation before he begins to market his precious ore.

The student does not expect commencement, with its subsequent victories of achievement, before he has spent years in preparatory study.

Why should the Christian then desire to enter into the Glory before he knows anything of the pain?

1. The Now and the Then of Sorrow. When Christ was speaking to the disciples, He said, "Ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you".

Now, we have the sorrow, due to His absence. Then, we have the sunshine due to His Presence.

The Word of God says, "Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep". But the opposite is just as true, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted".

When Peter was writing to the saints, he spoke of the great trials and tribulations through which we must pass, if need be, but for a season, but he said that at the Appearing of Jesus Christ, all these things would be found to bring blessing and honor and glory.

2. **The Now and the Then of Service.** The work that we are doing for the Lord Jesus Christ, as the days come and go, is not subject to immediate reward.

Paul in writing to the Hebrews said, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister". But Paul did not promise any immediate reward.

Peter, in writing of the pastor said, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock". Then, he added with gracious vision, "And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away".

Paul wrote that he had fought a good fight, had kept the faith and finished the course, but he did not see an immediate reward. He said that there was a crown of righteousness laid by for him which should be his in that day.

From the very moment that a child of God ceases his labour and goes to be with the Lord, he is blessed, because the Bible says, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours".

However, he who rests from his labor does not enter into his reward immediately. His works follow him and when Christ comes the second time, He brings his reward with Him.

Let us rejoice in the present service in view of

the coming glorious rewards which shall be ours when He comes.

3. The Now and the Then of Sacrifice. Some men have been called to give up a great deal in their following of the Lord. The Apostle Paul said that the things which were gain to him became loss, yea, he said, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ". He had turned away from the praise and the plaudits, from the blessings and the benefactions which would have fallen to him in his earthly life in the Sanhedrin, as a rich Jew. But he did not count that as anything to be regretted, he rather gloried in it. Forgetting everything that he had lost and sacrificed, he said that he reached toward the things which were before: and, said he, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus".

Moses in the olden days gave up the treasures of Egypt and her pleasures and her honors for the Lord. He chose rather to suffer affliction with the children of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He esteemed the reproach of Christ as greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. The reason for his reckoning is found in this expression, "He had respect unto the recompence of reward". He looked beyond Pharaoh and his dynasty. He looked beyond Egypt, which was the granary of the world. He looked beyond his position as a world-leader in Pharaoh's Court, and he saw that which is unseeable. He saw the Lord Jesus Christ coming again, and he endured.

4. The Now and the Then of Suffering. In discussing the Coming of the Lord as the acme of the

Christian's experience, those who suffer now should remember that they will sing then. It is put this way in Romans 8:17, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us".

The Christian has an earnest expectation which will meet with its fruition at the Coming of the Lord and the manifestation of the sons of God. In II Timothy 2:12, we read, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us".

No wonder that Christ said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven".

All of this is what James suggests in the Spirit, when he says, "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain". So also, says he, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh".

II. THE END OF THE LORD.

We now come to the Holy Spirit's own description of the blessed culmination which shall take place when Christ shall come.

In discussing the end of the Lord and our patient waiting for that end, James says,

1. "Take, My Brethren, the Prophets, Who Have Spoken in the Name of the Lord, for an Example of Suffering Affliction, and of Patience". This would be, indeed, too long a consideration for our sermon. Even James found it impossible to pick

out the various Prophets, one at a time, and delineate upon how they suffered and were patient. There is, however, in the Word of God, one chapter which sums up for us, in a marvelous way, some of the trials and triumphs of the Old Testament saints.

The writer of the Hebrews also ran out of time. He had spoken quite at length about Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Sara, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and even of Rahab, the harlot. Then, he said, "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell" —and so he merely mentions the names of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthæ, of David also, and Samuel, etc. While failing, in time, to give us the inside of each one, he sums up their trials and their triumphs, thus:

> "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,
>
> "Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.
>
> "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:
>
> "And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:
>
> "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;
>
> "(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth" *(Heb. 11:33-38).*

How wonderful are these words we have just read! Everything mentioned befell those saints of God—"And these all, having obtained a good re-

port through faith, received not the promise". They died before they entered into their rewards.

However, they never gave up. They never despaired. Having known the Lord, they pressed steadily on in sorrow and service; sacrifice and suffering. Even until this hour, they have not entered into their reward. To be sure, they are at rest with the Lord, but their rewards await the "end of the Lord" which will be made manifest at "the Coming of the Lord".

God provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect.

In the Book of Revelation, we read how God addresses certain suffering saints, who will be living in the darkest hour of the world's history, during the days of tribulation. Then, it is that God says,

> "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:
> "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth"? *(Rev. 6:9-11)*.

Is this not gracious that the Lord wanted the suffering saints who had been slain, to wait until other saints suffered, that they might together receive their rewards?

It will be a wonderful time, to believers of all ages, when the time has come for the Lord to take unto Himself His greater power and reign; when the time "that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants, the Prophets, and to them that fear Thy Name", is come.

Many of the Old Testament saints willingly pressed on, because they believed that God would give deliverance by and by.

Joseph, in the prison during two long, dreary, dark years must have suffered agonies, but he never despaired. He knew that God would vindicate him for his righteousness and faith. Then, one day, it came about that Pharaoh remembered Joseph and he was enthroned next to the Monarch of the world's then greatest empire.

Take David. Those must have been trying weeks and months that David spent, fleeing from the wrath of Saul. From cave to cave, and from mountain fastness to mountain fastness, David made his way, until finally God remembered David. Saul was dead in battle, and David was enthroned as King in Israel.

What was true of Joseph and of David is true of all who truly follow Christ. It is given unto us not only to believe in His Name, but also to suffer for His sake. However, the time is coming when we will be enthroned with our Pharaoh; when we, like David, will have our exaltation.

2. Take the Son as an Example of Suffering. After the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 11, has told us of the trials and the triumphs of the Old Testament saints, and how they died in faith, not having received the promise, and after in the first verse of chapter 12, he has told us that they are, to us, a great cloud of witnesses, who should inspire us as we run our race; then, He adds, that we should run, "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith".

The Lord Jesus Christ knew sorrow and service and sacrifice and suffering. While James emphasizes the taking of the Prophets as our example, Paul goes a little further and asks us to take the Lord Jesus as a like example. We should look at

the Prophets as an example of suffering and of patience, but we need to look beyond them and see Jesus, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God".

We need to consider **Him**, our Christ, who "endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself".

The Lord never wearied, nor did He give up as He pressed His way toward Calvary's Cross, with its shame and spitting, because He looked beyond the agonies of dying, to the hour of His exaltation and subsequent coronation.

3. **"Take Job as an Example"**. The Holy Spirit in James emphasizes Job and we are glad He did. To us, Job is the outstanding human sufferer described in the Word of God. He is also the outstanding victor. Let us see a few of the things that the Spirit gives us concerning Job's sufferings!

(1) He Lost His Goods. The Sabeans fell upon his oxen and took them away. The fire from heaven fell upon his sheep and burned them and consumed them. The Chaldeans, in three bands, fell upon his camels and carried them off. A mighty wind from the wilderness smote the four corners of the house where his sons and daughters feasted, and they were left dead.

(2) He Lost His Health. Satan challenged God and said, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life". Therefore, God permitted Satan, and he smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. "And he [Job] took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes".

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(3) He Lost All of His Friends. Possessions gone, children gone, health gone, now his friends are gone. He said, "My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight. I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I intreated him with my mouth. My breath is strange to my wife. * * All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me".

(4) He Seemingly, Lost His God. Not only were his possessions gone, his sons gone, his health gone and his friends gone, but he said, "I cry unto Thee and Thou dost not hear me". "I stand up and Thou regardest me not".

Did ever a man suffer as Job suffered? Think of him! He said, "I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls. My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat. My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep".

Did ever man suffer as Job suffered? So far as we know, none other, excepting alone the Son of Man, who suffered for us, the Just for the unjust.

No wonder then that James, passing rapidly by the Prophets, dwelt for the moment upon Job, and said, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job".

Let us now consider how Job acted mid all of his struggles:

First, when his property and possessions were swept away, and his own sons and daughters were slain, Job arose and rent his mantle and shaved

his head and fell down upon the ground and worshiped,

> "And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" *(Job 1:21)*.

Later on, when his own body was covered with boils and his skin was made tough and black, and his wife besought him to curse God and die, Job said unto her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil"?

We are willing to grant that Job bemoaned his lot and groaned greatly under his consuming pain and disappointments; particularly did he chafe under the onslaughts of his three supposed friends. Yet, in it all, Job never condemned God. He rather said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him: but I will maintain mine own ways before Him. He also shall be my salvation".

Perhaps, the highest flight of Job's faith is expressed when he cries out, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" .

These words, spoken at the very climax of Job's crosses, were not the mere expression of a flight of imagination. Before he spoke them, he said, "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever"! We rejoice that God answered this prayer and that the

words of Job are written in the Book of books and engraven upon the hearts of multiplied millions.

What was the end of the Lord in the case of Job? The end of which James spoke? We find it in the last chapter of his book.

> "So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.
>
> "He had also seven sons and three daughters.
>
> "After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, *even* four generations.
>
> "So Job died, *being* old and full of days" *(Job 42:12, 13, 16, 17)*.

We had thought to complete our sermon to-day, but we find that it will be necessary to close for the present, as we must not weary you with much speaking. The final message of James, we will consider next week.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"THE PLACE OF PRAYER"

"THE PLACE OF PRAYER"

JAMES 5:13-20.

THE Book of James culminates, as every life which has its distresses should continue and culminate, in the consideration of "The Place of Prayer."

In Ephesians 6, we read that we wrestle against principalities and powers, against the world rulers of this darkness and against wicked spirits which dwell in the heavenlies. When God tells us how to meet so great and varied an enemy, He begins to say, "Put on the whole armour of God", and He concludes His message with the memorable words, "Praying **always** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit".

God has given us, in the Book of James, a marvelous message concerning the divers temptations which befall His saints. He has discussed these testings from every angle and viewpoint. In the sermon we gave last, we showed "The End of the Lord", in the rewards of His saints. God now goes on to give a final admonition, this is of the supremest importance. He hastens to tell us "The Place of Prayer in Our Present Distresses."

I. A WORD TO THE AFFLICTED.

Verse 13 says, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms".

These words might be paraphrased thus, "Prayer should be the part of the afflicted, and praise the part of the blessed." This spirit has not always prevailed among saints.

When a pastor berated an aged saint because she was given too much to complaints, the saint is supposed to have said "In the world we have tribulation, and if we have tribulation, we ought to tribulate." This, alas, has been the method of many. They have groaned, and they have growled; they have murmured, and they have found fault in every passing trial.

The Children of Israel, coming out of Egypt, passed through a howling wilderness. It was a place of scorpions. What did they do? They murmured. They sought to raise up an insurrection against Moses, and to return to Egypt. They tempted God. They believed him not.

How different were Paul and Silas! With their feet in the stocks, in the jail at Philippi, they rejoiced and sang, praising God. Madam Guyon put in jail for the faith, wrote:

> "A little bird am I,
> Shut in from fields of air,
> Yet here I sit and sing a song
> To Him who placed me there."

A pastor said to us on one occasion, as we were preaching in Union Hill, N. J., would you like to see a little of Heaven? We assured him that we would. He took us to a place that had as little of Heaven in it, so far as its furnishings were concerned, as we had ever seen. It was a tenement, divested of every comfort of life. Up the rickety stairs we went. Our way was lighted by a flickering gas jet. At last we entered a dingy room, clean but bare. On a bed of straw lay a young woman who had never known anything but pain. Her spine was twisted and she could not move in her bed,

without inexplicable suffering. We sat down with a sob in our heart. However, it was not long until her joy and peace, and the glory of God written in her countenance, made us marvel. Midst all of her affliction, she was rejoicing in the Lord; and she made us to rejoice. As we went away, we said to the pastor, "You were right. You have shown us a touch of Heaven."

James' admonition is a remarkable one. He tells the afflicted to pray. Perhaps, he thinks they could not sing. Then, he tells the merry, to sing psalms. We feel that the prosperous and happy are just as foreign to real praise to God, as the afflicted are foreign to real prayer.

II. A WORD TO THE SICK.

We suppose that since we first began these messages on James, some have been waiting to get to the statements of the Holy Spirit concerning the sick. Therefore, we wish to take them up carefully and Scripturally. We do not want to say anything that the Spirit does not say; nor, do we want to leave unsaid anything that He does say. Let us consider His words, step by step.

1. Let the Sick Call for the Elders of the Church. There is no warrant in these words for ministers to become healers, instead of the proclaimers of salvation.

In preaching, we are to go to the ends of the earth, to every creature, proclaiming the power of salvation. In healing, we are to await the call of the sick.

There is nothing in this to cause the sick to complain, if the preacher or the elder does not come

around to see them when they are sick, unless they have notified them and requested them to come.

The Lord Jesus going down the road to Emmaus, made as though He would go further. The disciples, however, besought Him that He would go with them to their abode, as the day was far spent and the night was at hand. The Lord gladly went.

When the elders force themselves upon the sick, they do not have the reception that they should have, because the sick have not yet felt the need of their coming. Let us remember the command, "Let him call for the elders of the church".

It is very necessary also to note that there is here a plurality of elders, not **one** but **more than one.** It is where two or three are gathered together in His Name, that there is a special promise given of God.

2. Let the Elders Pray over Him. The elders have no healing power. They do not carry with them some magical wand, which they seek to wave over the sick; they do not possess some "spell", or "mystical powers" which they wish to display. They are not "medicine men", coming with incantations, to put a spell over evil spirits.

The object of having the elders come to see the sick is that they may join with the sick in prayer to the God, who is able to heal. His Name is Jehovah-Ropheka. He is "The Lord that healeth thee".

Elders are no more than other saints, so far as their healing power is concerned: all are in utter dependence upon Him. They come to plead and to pray.

3. Let the Elders Anoint with Oil. This is a part

of the praying; that is, it goes along with the praying.

The oil is not to be used as a medicine, nor is it symbolical of medicine. It may be, in cases, medicinal to cover people with oil, or to rub them in oil for their healing, but that is not a job for the elders. The Spirit of God is not referring to oil as a remedy. "Anointing" with oil in itself is too meager an "application" of oil to possess healing efficacy.

When we read the 23rd Psalm, "He anointeth my head with oil"; we never think that David was talking about having the doctor rub him with oil. The oil is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, and it speaks of His power in the body. The elders are to pray to God, because they cannot do anything apart from God. They are to anoint with oil, because the healing is by the power of the Holy Ghost. He who seeks to make "oil" a medicinal reference in James 5:14, is weak in his faith in a miracle-working God.

4. Let the Elders Anoint Him * * in the Name of the Lord. How wonderful it is that God allows us to use **His Name!** The man that Peter healed, was healed through that Name; and Peter said there was "none other name given under Heaven and among men, whereby we must be saved".

A prayer that is not in the Name of the Lord, in a very real way, is not a real prayer. It is not an effective prayer. It is only when God puts His Name, on to our petitions that we can have victory in prayer, or expect success in answer to prayers.

5. Let Them All Believe the Promise—"The Prayer of Faith Shall Save the Sick and the Lord

Shall Raise Him Up". Divine healing is not accomplished through a faithless prayer; it is brought about through the prayer of faith. The prayer of faith is a prayer that believes that it has that for which it asks. The prayer of faith is the prayer of full assurance. It is the prayer which believes that it is done.

When Jonathan went up to fight against the Philistines, before he ever met the foe, he said, "The Lord hath delivered them into our hand".

Jesus said,

> "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them,* and ye shall have *them" (Mark 11:24).*

Not everyone who calls for the elders; not everyone who is anointed with oil is healed. The prayer of faith saves the sick. When God gives the prayer of faith; when the assurance of faith is in the heart of the elders and of the sick, **"the Lord shall raise him up".** This is the **"shall" of certainty.** There is no "maybe" anywhere about. When there is no "maybe" in the faith, there can be no "maybe" in the healing.

We do not say that this prayer of faith can be worked up. We believe that it must come down from Heaven. It is given of God.

6. Let Him Confess. This is another thing that should not be overlooked when the elders visit the sick.

Sickness does not always come upon one because of his personal sins. However, sickness may be a chastisement from God. Thus, the Holy Ghost, speaking of the Lord raising up the sick, adds: "If he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven

him". Thus, also, the Spirit urges: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed".

God desires to heal the sick in body; but He desires more to heal the sick in soul.

It was John who wished that certain saints might be in health, and prosper even as their soul prospered.

Physical healing is certainly conditioned upon spiritual health. Therefore, if sin is in the life, it must be confessed. **The prayer of faith cannot operate where there is unconfessed sin.**

First, we must confess our faults one to another; secondly, we must pray one for another that we may be healed.

7. Prayer Availeth Much. In verse 15, it says, that the prayer of faith shall save the sick. In verse 16, it says, that the effectual and fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Sometimes, according to this, God does not give everything, but He does give **much.**

God would not have us isolate prayer alone to the needs of our body. Prayer avails **much** along every line, and in every realm, where faith operates.

That God is turning us from the prayer that brings physical healing, to the prayer that meets every need is plainly seen by the example of prayer's accomplishments that is set forth, as we approach the final words of this last chapter of James.

"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

"And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit".

Elijah is set forth as our great exemplar in prayer.

(1) He Was a Man Subject to Like Passions as We Are. The saints of old who met the issues of life were not different from us. They were not some special brand of men, whom God had miraculously prepared for Himself. They were sons of the same first parent with us, and they had the same general issues of life to face as we have.

The centuries which have passed since Elijah moved among men have in no way bettered the texture of the flesh and improved the weave of our general make-up. Education may have advanced somewhat; invention may have brought new devices, but the heart is the same, and testings and the trials are alike to men of all ages.

We need not endeavor to excuse our failures in prayer, or our weakness in faith, to changes which have taken place in our human nature. We are subject to like passions as were the men of olden time, and they were subject to like passions as are we. We can reach our hand back and down through the centuries and grasp hands with those who met life's problems of old, for we are made of the same fiber as they, and we have the same conflicts as they.

(2) He Prayed Earnestly that It Might Not Rain, and It Rained Not. A worldly court had shut God out, and Elijah prayed down God's judgment against it. How remarkable to see the Prophet on his knees pleading his case. He prayed and God answered his prayer. He prayed specifically,

and God answered specifically. He prayed for the impossible, and God wrought the impossible. He prayed negatively, that it might not rain, and it rained not; he prayed positively, that it might rain, and it rained.

In our day there is much talk about the reflex influence of prayer. Prayer is beneficial they say, because it acts upon the consciousness of the one who prays. They say that prayer never gets through to a personal God. They say that prayer merely hits us back again. It strikes against the sky and rebounds.

Not a word of this is true. Prayer really reaches the ears of God. He hears prayer. He answers prayer. Prayer does things.

He who eliminates prayer from his life, eliminates the touch of a personal God. He shuts God out from his reckonings, and shuts himself in to an arm of flesh. Apart from the worship and praise feature of prayer, prayer is a confession of dependence on God, and a profession of faith in God.

We pray because we need God, because we cannot walk alone. We pray because we believe in God, and believe that He knows and cares for us.

Elijah had a great problem to meet, and he met it in prayer to a great God. No matter whatsoever the problem may be, God is greater than the problem. There is nothing that baffles His omnipotent arm. He can walk where we dare not go, and do what we could never do.

Prayer is a vital power in the matters of daily concern. "It rained not", and "it rained", accordingly as Elijah prayed. The very heavens bend their knees to crown God as Lord. Winds and

waves still obey the voice of the matchless Son of God. We have no need to fear—pray. We have no need to surrender our position, and to yield our integrity—pray.

(3) He Prayed and the Earth Brought Forth Her Fruit. Is your life a fruitless life, is your ministry a fruitless ministry?—pray. Prayer makes a fruitless vine, fruitful. It is God who giveth the increase. There is a unique little poem we would like to give just here:

> "These lads to gain the fruit must shake the tree,
> Good reader, mark the lesson writ for thee!
> If from the tree of promis'd mercy thou
> Wouldst win the good which loadeth every bough,
> Then urge the promise well with pleading cries,
> Move heaven itself with vehemence of sighs;
> Soon shall celestial fruit thy toil repay—
> 'Tis ripe, and waits for him who loves to pray.
> What if thou fail at first, yet give not o'er,
> Bestir thyself to labor more and more;
> Enlist a brother's sympathetic knee,
> The tree will drop its fruit when two agree:
> Entreat the Holy Ghost to give thee power,
> Then shall the fruit descend in joyful shower."

III. A FINAL WORD TO ALL.

We now come to the concluding words of the Spirit through James. This conclusion is a climax. It seems to place the responsibility of another's weal or woe in spiritual life, upon the shoulders of saints.

Hear the words—they are verses 19 and 20, the final verses of chapter five:

> "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;
> "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins".

Once more the Spirit addresses the brethren. He says, **"Brethren,** if any of **you** do err from the faith, and one convert **him".**

There is no doubt but that the one whom the brethren are to convert, is one of the brethren who has erred from the faith. The word "convert" does not mean "regenerate". The Spirit had been saying, through the whole Book of James, some very pungent things to certain brethren who had erred. They had stepped aside from the truth concerning their trials. The Spirit is seeking the co-operation of the true brethren in restoring these erring saints. Think of it? We are workers **together with God.**

The key-note of the Book of Acts is this: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us". What blessed union is this?—"The Holy Ghost and us"!

The Spirit gave His message to certain erring saints. It is found in the Epistle of James. The Spirit now wants other saints to make use of this Epistle, to convert those who have erred.

What will be the gracious reward?

1. We Will Save a Soul from Death. We do not believe that the death of this verse means the eternal death of the wicked. It may mean a judgment of **physical death** that God lets fall upon certain brethren who dishonor Him. "For this cause many are weak, and sickly among you, and many sleep". It may refer to certain testings of fire that will fall upon saints who are unfaithful to the Lord, at the Bema judgment.

The unsaved may be saved through faith in Christ from eternal death and from eternal banishment and punishment in the lake of fire; the saved, who err, may be saved from physical death, which

may be theirs as a chastisement, and from the disastrous results of the fire that shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

2. We Will Hide a Multitude of Sins. This is more easily grasped. When a backslider is saved from his backsliding, and when one who errs from the truth is saved from his erring, God's forgiveness wipes out a multitude of sins.

Thank God, "If we confess **our sins,** He is faithful and just to forgive us **our sins,** and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". This Scripture from I John 1:9, is much akin to the one we have before us in James 5:20.

Sin forgiven, is sin cleansed; sin done away; sin blotted out; sin hidden.

There is, however, one other vital thought. It is this: When we save a brother from erring concerning the truth, we save him from continuing on in his sinning. The bad effects of the river of his unbelief and error cease to flow. His sins are forgiven; and, being forgiven they are hidden; and, being hidden they cease to work havoc wherever he may go.

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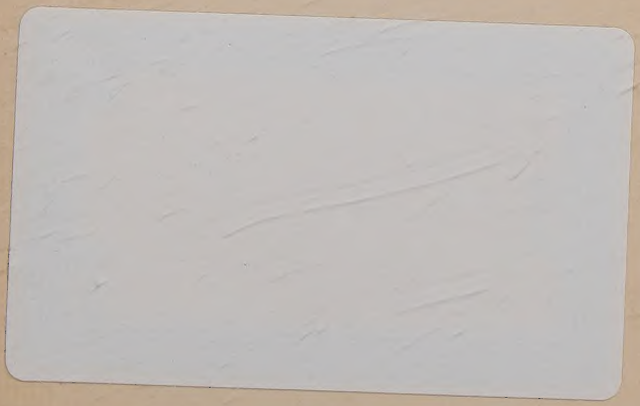

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